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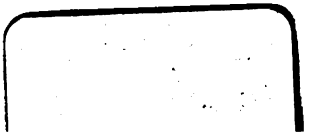

THE MISSION

OF

THE SPIRIT;

OR,

THE OFFICE AND WORK OF THE COMFORTER IN HUMAN REDEMPTION.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THIS is the dispensation of the Spirit. We are living in the very midst of its culminating glories. The rushing fires of another Pentecost are coming upon the Church now as they have not during the centuries preceding the one in which we live. All eyes are lifted expectant to the everlasting hills, where intercedes a glorified and exalted Christ. Or ever His triumphal chariot had wheeled upward to the gates of pearl, He left His promise and His pledge to the Church of the wonderful gift of the Comforter. That promise and that pledge have only been fulfilled in part—in individual instances, and in certain localities. The Church, overrun with worldliness and beclouded by unbelief, has been comparatively powerless for the want of the full baptism of the Comforter. And the world, this poor, lost, fallen world, still remains unransomed from its sins and their consequences. The great work of preparation for its complete redemption seems, however, well-nigh finished. The mountains have been levelled, and the valleys upreared; the crooked places have been straightened, and the rough places smoothened, and the time for "all flesh to see the salvation of our God" is at hand.

What is now wanted is a universal Pentecost, not only that all the babbling millions of earth may hear

of "the wonderful works of God" in their "own tongue wherein they were born," but that they may be "pricked to the heart" by the arrows of the convincing Spirit, and be saved by His power.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that, with all the teachings of the Divine Head in reference to the Comforter, with all the luminous promises of His gifts and grace, so little, comparatively, has been written concerning Him. The world is full of books about Christ, and the number of them is constantly increasing; but we can almost count on our finger ends the books written specifically about the Holy Ghost. And yet His sovereign agency in the completion and consummation of redemption's work is constantly acknowledged in the Word of God. Why this is so, that so little has been written, we can scarcely tell; and yet, because it is so, there is much of ignorance, doubt, and unbelief in the Church as to His work and His power. Many huge volumes of theology devote only a few pages to the consideration of His Godhead, His offices, and His work. There is now and then a sermon preached upon these all-important themes; but too seldom are they introduced into the sacred desk.

The author of this book has long felt that a treatise bearing directly upon these questions is a *desideratum* in the literature of the Christian Church. In conversation with several leading divines in his own and other denominations, he has found that they entertained the same views and feelings, and he has been encouraged by their advice to proceed with the preparation of this volume. How successful he

may have been in the performance of his work, the reader will judge. Due acknowledgment has been made of the authors from whose works quotations have been made, in foot-notes, and therefore no mention of their names is needed here.

The author fully believes that the coming and the crowning conflict of the Church will be about the truths dwelt upon in this volume. Indeed, there is, even now, "skirmishing all along the line." The great aim of modern infidelity is to ignore all spiritual agencies; to banish God from the world; to deny all miraculous agency and all moral regeneration; to proclaim a cold, dull, dead materialism; and to bind the universe in the chains of fixed, irreversible, and inviolable law. If the writer has made it to appear that there is not only a supernatural and superhuman, but a Divine Agency, working out great spiritual results, and effecting great moral regenerations—an agent who, because He is God, is capable of bringing about the complete transformation and revivification of a fallen and dead humanity, and who is able and willing and ready to do this work now—he will be glad that he has contributed something that will serve to call attention to the ever-blessed Comforter.

Bespeaking the indulgence of the critical reader, and beseeching the earnest, prayerful reading of this book by all classes of the ministry and laity of the evangelical Churches, the author sends forth this volume with many prayers that all may find a "blessing in it."

L. R. D.

ST. PAUL'S PARSONAGE, *Elizabeth, N.J.*

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

AT the request of the London Wesleyan Book Committee, I undertook the task of editing for the English public the Rev. Lewis R. Dunn's volume on "The Mission of the Spirit." With the Author's sanction, most freely and courteously conveyed, the process of revision has been carried through.

I have prepared and prefixed a Table of Contents, which gives a fair view of the foundations and course of the Author's argument.

Two Chapters—VII. and VIII.—are transposed, so as to bring under the reader's notice "Adoption" before "Regeneration."

Two Chapters—one on "The Holy Spirit as the Source of Inspiration," and the other on "The Sin against the Holy Ghost,"—have been left out, because they seemed scarcely to belong to the specific subject under consideration; and did, withal, interrupt the fine flow of thought and feeling common to the other Chapters. The Book is more "compact together" without these two Chapters than it would be with them.

The Appendix, which I have compiled—by permission—from the Rev. Charles Prest's able work

on. "The Witness of the Spirit," will neither lack interest, nor be wanting in profit.

For the rest, revision has consisted chiefly in verifying and correcting quotations from Scripture, and removing the references from the body of the text to the foot of the page; and, generally, rendering the work more simple in style, and therefore more serviceable to the busy and the unlearned. Hebrew, and Greek, and—as far as possible—Latin, have been struck out; and due homage has been paid to our mother-tongue.

I pray that HE for Whose honour this Book was written may watch for good over this Edition, and make every copy a rich blessing to the reader.

JOSEPH BUSH.

SYDENHAM,
March 8th, 1872.

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TRANSLATED BY ABRAHAM COLES, M.D., PH.D.

I.

Creator, Spirit, Guest Divine,
Come, visit and inhabit Thine;
Enter the mind's most holy place,
And breasts Thou madest fill with grace.

II.

Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Of God Most High, the Gift Complete;
The living Fount, the Fire, the Love,
And Holy Unction from above.

III.

Sevenfold the gifts at Thy command,
Finger of God's supreme right hand;
The promise of the Father, Who
Dost throats enrich with utterance new.

IV.

Kindle the senses, light impart;
Infuse Thy love in every heart;
Weaken our body's bent to wrong;
In lasting virtue make us strong.

V.

Drive farther off the hellish foe,
And constant peace henceforth bestow;
May we—Thou, Leader in the way—
All evil shun, nor go astray.

VI.

Grant we may know in verity
The Father and the Son through Thee;
And in all time may Thee believe
Spirit of Both, and so receive.

VII.

Be God the Father glorified,
And God the Son Who for us died
And rose, and God the Paraclete,
Ages on ages infinite.

VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS.

WRITTEN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

TRANSLATED BY ABRAHAM COLES, M.D., PH.D.

I.

Come, O Holy Spirit, come,
And, from Thy celestial home,
  Of Thy light a ray impart!
Come Thou, Father of the poor!
Come Thou, Giver of heaven's store!
  Come Thou, Light of every heart!

II.

Promised Comforter, and best;
Of the soul, the dearest Guest;
  Sweet Refreshment here below;
Rest, in labour, to the feet;
Coolness in the scorching heat;
  Solace in the time of woe.

III.

O most blessed Light! the heart's
Innermost, most hidden parts
  Of Thy faithful people, fill!
Not without Thy favour can
Anything be good in man,
  Anything that is not ill.

IV.

What is sordid make Thou clean;
What is dry make moist and green;
What is wounded heal for aye.
Bend what's rigid to Thy will;
Warm Thou whatsoe'er is chill;
Guide what's devious and astray.

V.

To Thy faithful given be—
Those confiding still in Thee—
Graciously the holy seven;
Give Thou virtue's recompense,
Give a safe departure hence,
Give the eternal joy of heaven.

THE

MISSION OF THE SPIRIT.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS PERSONALITY AND GODHEAD.

"*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*"—2 Thessalonians iii. 5.

"I BELIEVE in the Holy Ghost." So universal Christendom has given utterance to its belief from age to age. But while this utterance has been uniform and universal, the interpretations given to it have widely differed. The Greek Church, while holding to His essential Godhead, teaches that He "proceeds only from the Father." The Romish, as well as the Evangelical Protestant Church, holds to the procession "from the Father and the Son." The Unitarian or Socinian Community denies the personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost, and looks upon Him as merely an attribute, an emanation, or an influence. For ages past, fierce controversies have been waged by those occupying these different standpoints. The history of these controversies is of deep interest to the Christian scholar; but it is no part of my design in this volume to enter upon this field.

Nor is this struggle yet ended. It is more than probable that as Atheism has denied the existence of God, and as Arianism has denied the divinity of Christ, so the enemies of God and of His truth will assail the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost. This, indeed, may be the last great struggle which the truth of God may have to endure before the glories of millennial day shall burst upon this world. The struggle with the Atheist is over. The struggle with the Rationalist, Pantheist, Spiritualist, and Scientist must soon close; but the struggle with the blasphemers against the Holy Ghost is coming on. I would do my part toward preparing the Church for this final conflict. In so doing, I shall endeavour to state, illustrate, and enforce the teachings of Holy Scripture concerning the character and perfections of the Comforter, and His offices and relations in the economy of human redemption.

The Holy Ghost is a Person distinct from the Father and the Son, and not merely an Attribute or an Emanation from either.

The evidence adduced to sustain this position is from the word of God. In the very nature of the case there is, there can be, no other. No man can read that word with any degree of care without noticing that there is a Being constantly referrred to as acting with the Father, or with the Son, or with both; and that that Being is called by the names, bears the titles, possesses the attributes, and performs the acts of God.

Consider some of the sayings of Christ. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Com-

forter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."[a] "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things."[b] "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me."[c] "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin."[d] "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."[e] Now, any interpretation which makes the Holy Spirit an Attribute or an Emanation renders these, and many other portions of the word of God, utterly unmeaning.

It is well known that, at the first, Arius regarded the Holy Ghost as a creature, created by Christ; but afterward His personality was denied by the Arians; and the view since held by them is that He is the exerted energy, or power, of God. Let us regard this view in the light of other portions of the word of God. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power."[f] The Arian interpretation would make it read, "God anointed Jesus with the power of God, and with power." Again,

[a] John xiv. 16, 17. [b] John xiv. 26. [c] John xv. 26.
[d] John xvi. 8. [e] John xvi. 13, 14. [f] Acts x. 38.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."[g] That is, according to the Arian view, by the power of the power of God.

These illustrations might be multiplied; but enough has been advanced to prove His personality, and also to show the unsoundness of the Arian interpretation.

But the Holy Spirit is not only a *Person;* He is also a *Divine* Person. To prove this, I shall show that the *Names,* the *Attributes,* and the *Acts* of God are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

1. The NAMES. The apostle Peter said to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God."[h] Here we see that the Holy Ghost is called God. "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."[i] "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."[j] Now this Person, thus addressed, is called the Lord, is regarded as able to direct the hearts of the Thessalonians, and to inspire them with patience; and prayer is offered to Him by an inspired apostle. Yet He is evidently neither God the Father, nor God the Son. Hence we see that the highest names, "God" and "the Lord," are given to the Holy Ghost.

2. The ATTRIBUTES of God are ascribed to Him.

[g] Romans xv. 13. [h] Acts v. 3, 4. [i] 2 Corinthians iii. 17. [j] 2 Thessalonians iii. 5.

Eternity.—"Christ who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God."[k]

Omnipotence.—"The Spirit of God hath made me."[l]

Omniscience.—"The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."[m]

Omnipresence.—"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"[n] This is said of all believers; and if the body of each Christian is the temple of the Holy Ghost, then He must be present with, and abide in, a multitude at the same time, and in widely different localities; and to do this, He must be omnipresent.

Holiness.—In the New Testament this attribute is ascribed to Him no less than ninety-three times.

Truth.—"When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth."[o]

Goodness.—"Teach me to do Thy will; for Thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."[p]

3. The ACTS of God are ascribed to Him.

Creation.—"By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens."[q]

Inspiration.—"God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."[r] "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."[s]

Resurrection.—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, being put to death in the flesh, but

[k] Hebrews ix. 14. [l] Job xxxiii. 4. [m] 1 Corinthians ii. 10.
[n] 1 Corinthians vi. 19. [o] John xvi. 13. [p] Psalm cxliii. 10.
[q] Job xxvi. 13. [r] Hebrews i. 1. [s] 2 Peter i. xxi.

quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."[t]

4. The Personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost is acknowledged in the form of Christian Baptism, and also in the solemn and impressive form of benediction.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."[u] "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."[v] Now, if the Arian interpretation be correct, then we are baptized and blessed in the name of one God, one creature, and one attribute or emanation.

5. In many parts of Scripture the Holy Ghost is associated with the Father and the Son in *acts, titles, authority,* and *worship,* and is spoken of, or addressed, as of *equal power, glory,* and *authority.* "And now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent Me."[w] "I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."[x] Isaiah said, "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts; also I heard the voice of the Lord."[y] And St. Paul saith, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."[z] And St. John writes, "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory"—the glory of Christ—"and spake of Him."[a] It was doubtless in

[t] 1 Peter iii. 18, 19. [u] Matthew xxviii. 19.
[v] 2 Corinthians xiii. 14. [w] Isaiah xlviii. 16. [x] Haggai ii. 4, 5.
[y] Isaiah, vi. 5, 8, [z] Acts xxviii. 25. [a] John xii. 41.

view of the presence of the three persons in the Godhead, that the six-winged seraphim cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts!"[b]

At the baptism of Christ, we note the voice of the Father, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. "And Jesus when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[c] Here is the Father speaking from heaven, acknowledging the One just baptized by John as His beloved Son; and here is, also, the Spirit, distinct from both, and yet in harmony and union with both, anointing the Son of God and the Son of man for His work.

In the great work of saving the sinner, the Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; but after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared—not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy—He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."[d]

These proofs might be greatly multiplied. They

[b] Isaiah vi. 3. [c] Matthew iii. 16, 17. [d] Titus iii. 3—7.

are, in fact, so abundant that to quote all legitimately bearing upon these several points would occupy a large part of the present volume. Here, however, are enough to convince any honest mind of the distinct personality and essential Godhead of the Holy Ghost.

Let us, therefore, bow before the throne, and devoutly say, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost! As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end! Amen."

Hail, Holy Ghost, Jehovah, Third
In order of the Three;
Sprung from the Father and the Word
From all eternity!

God's image, which our sins destroy,
Thy grace restores below;
And truth, and holiness, and joy,
From Thee their fountain flow.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: PROMISED AND BESTOWED.

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh."—Acts ii. 16, 17.

EIGHT hundred years before the advent of Christ, the Prophet Joel heralded the coming of the Holy Ghost in the following language: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit."[e] From generation to generation this promise remained on record, and at length it had its first grand and signal fulfilment upon the day of Pentecost. So clearly indeed was it fulfilled that St. Peter declared, "This is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel."[f] It was not until toward the close of our Lord's public ministry that he began to call the attention of His disciples to this ancient promise. It was then, when they were sad and sorrowing at the announcement of His departure from them, that He promised to make good the words of Joel, and send

[e] Joel ii. 28, 29. [f] Acts ii. 16.

to them the Comforter, the richest gift of heaven. "If I depart, I will send Him unto you."[g] The promises now began to multiply, and the sweet and gracious assurances of an ever-abiding Comforter were unstintedly given to them. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."[h] "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things."[i] "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."[j] "When He [the Comforter] is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment."[k] "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."[l]

After His resurrection, the Son of God repeated His promise, and proclaimed the near advent of the Comforter. "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."[m] "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."[n] "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."[o] It was, doubtless, for the fulfilment of this promise that they tarried

[g] John xvi. 7. [h] John xiv. 16, 17. [i] John xiv. 26.
[j] John xv. 26. [k] John xvi. 8. [l] John xvi. 13.
[m] Luke xxiv. 49. [n] Acts i. 5. [o] Acts i. 9.

in the upper room at Jerusalem, and held their ten days' prayer-meeting.

There was no room for doubt in the minds of the early disciples; nor after the ascension of Christ did they seem to have any doubt or misgiving as to the bestowment of this gift. What thoughts may have entered into their minds as, day after day, they waited, and prayed for, and expected, the gift so freely promised, we know not. We can readily conceive how that dark shadows of doubt might have flitted across their minds as the promise was delayed. They might have said to one another, "Have we misunderstood the promise?" "Are we asking aright for this gift?" "Why, then, is it delayed?" But if these thoughts passed through their minds, they were quickly dispelled, and faith triumphed. If such questionings had risen in their minds, the answer would doubtless have been ready and prompt. "We cannot misunderstand that promise. He certainly said that if He should go away, He would send us the Comforter; and He has gone away. We saw Him go up into heaven. He is certainly there. And then, too, we are asking for this gift in His Name, as He told us to ask. We will pray on. The promise must be fulfilled."

It may be also that they tried to imagine to themselves how the Comforter would come. Perhaps some of them, who knew of the scenes which had occurred at the baptism of their Lord, thought He would come in a bodily shape, like a dove brooding over them, and thus visibly abide among

them. Others, probably, rose in the fulness of their faith to the conception that this was to be an inward gift, unaccompanied by external signs; a gift unseen by mortal eye, but to be consciously felt in the very depths of their spiritual being. But, whatever were their thoughts, they still prayed on in anxious, yet undoubting, expectation of the coming of the promised Comforter.

It was on the tenth day after they had seen their Lord and Master go into heaven—"when the day of Pentecost was fully come"—that they were again found assembled together in the upper room. It was early in the morning; how early we do not know. "But it must have been very early: for after they had received the baptism, and filled all Jerusalem with the noise of their new powers, Peter reminded the multitude, who came together, that it was only the third hour of the day,—nine o'clock in the morning."* "They were all with one accord in one place." Although the promise had been long delayed, still their faith did not waver; their courage was undaunted. It is likely that they had been looking forward to the day of Pentecost as the time when this gift of power was to be bestowed upon them. They may have said one to another, "Was not Pentecost the time when the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, amid 'thunderings and lightnings, and the noise of a trumpet,' and formally inaugurated the dispensation of the law? And may not this anniversary of that grand event be the chosen and ordained period when the Holy Ghost

* Tongue of Fire. By the Rev. William Arthur.

will come down upon Mount Zion, and inaugurate the new dispensation?"

However this may be, there they were, all of the disciples, one hundred and twenty in number. Not one was absent, and there was no dissentient voice. Heart beat with heart; faith was linked to faith: prayer was mingled with prayer; and all eyes were lifted up to the hills whence they expected "the Comforter" would come, when "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind." It was not wind, but a sound like the rushing of the wind. It did not come in at the window, nor through the door, but it came down from heaven. The sound was not natural; it was preternatural. When God appeared of old to Elijah, there was not only a fire and an earthquake, but a "strong wind that rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks." Now again the sound of a "rushing mighty wind" heralds the approach of the Lord—the Holy Ghost. They understood the sign. Awed, subdued, overpowered, they fell upon their knees or upon their faces as Elijah had done, and then upon the disciples the Spirit of God came, thrilling and throbbing through every part of their being, hallowing and inspiring them with His presence and grace, emboldening them for their great work, filling them with peace and joy, and causing their tongues to speak the praises of the Lord. And now, with faces all aglow with the inward rapture of their souls, and their hearts pulsating with the new, Divine life, they ventured to look up, and "John sees Peter's head crowned with

fire, Peter sees James crowned with fire, James sees Nathanael crowned with fire, Nathanael sees Mary crowned with fire, and round and round the fire sits 'on each of them.'" * Thus, while they were anointed with the Holy Ghost to be the priests of the new dispensation, they were also crowned with fire as kings unto the Lord our God.

It is well for us to pause at this point and notice that, vast and important as was the work which was given them to do, and although during those ten days, while they were waiting and praying, thousands of men and women went down into their graves; yet they were not allowed to go forth and preach the Gospel, but were commanded to tarry in Jerusalem until they had been endued with power from on high. It would, in fact, have been useless for them to attempt so great a work without this baptism. They would have lacked the grand, essential qualification for it, and their ministry would have proved a failure.

The time was not lost while they tarried. Nor is that time lost by the minister or the Church which is spent in pleading for the Holy Ghost. O how often are both impatient to engage in turning men from darkness to light; and, commencing without the needful qualifications, they are overmastered, mortified, discouraged! O ye ministers of Jesus, go not forth to this work unless the baptism is upon you! O ye followers of Christ, see well to it that ye are anointed with this power! If ministers and members would thus, like the first

* Tongue of Fire, p. 36.

disciples, wait before God day and night for this baptism, it would soon be said a second time to the Church, Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

The immediate results of that early pentecostal morning baptism have astonished the world for nearly two thousand years. Timid disciples—one of whom, and he the chief, had denied his Lord, and the rest of the eleven had fled in terror; men who after His crucifixion had abandoned all hope, and who had even doubted His resurrection when made known to them by the women—now came forth boldly and preached Jesus and the resurrection, braving the Jewish Sanhedrim and the power of the Roman empire; "and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Not many days after this, when persecution began to rage against them, when the council, swayed by mingled emotions of rage and alarm, threatened them with imprisonment and death if they persisted in preaching Jesus, another baptism of the Spirit came upon them. The prayer which they offered upon that occasion is remarkable, not for its length, nor its learnedness, but for its simplicity and its courageous faith. And when that prayer was ended, the very place where they assembled "was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." We are not to regard these as the only baptisms which they received. They were only grand specimens of the daily experience of the Church. And what was the daily expe-

rience of the Church then may be the daily experience of the Church now. Are we praying for it? Are we believing and holding fast to the promise? Are we, even now, looking up to the heavens and expecting His descent upon us? If so, then He will come, not preceded by the rushing mighty wind, not placing coronals of fire upon our brows, not shaking the place where we are praying; but nevertheless just as really, as fully, as gloriously anointing us with His grace and filling us with His power.

For this was not merely a gift for the Apostles and their contemporaries, but for all people, in every clime and in every age. The prophecy of Joel had clearly settled this point: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh." And the Apostle Peter, under the plenary inspiration of the Comforter, after quoting this promise, said, "The promise is unto you,"—all that were there gathered together —"Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven;" more than this, "and to your children" —your descendants in all future ages; more than this, "it is to all that are afar off"—to the Gentile world,[p] and more than this, it is even to "as many as the Lord our God shall call."[q] No language could more clearly point out the universality of the promise than this. It as certainly proclaims the promise to every person, in every age, and clime, as if an angel from heaven had personally addressed him, and said, "The promise of the Holy Ghost is to you;" or as if his name were written in light on

[p] Ephesians ii. 17. [q] Acts ii. 39.

the tablet of the sky, and under it the assurance, "The promise of the Holy Ghost is to you." O then, child of God, grasp the promise! It is yours in all its freeness, richness, and fulness; and it is yours *now*. It is yours every day, every hour, every moment; and sooner shall the blue arch above you shrivel into atoms, and the earth upon which you stand melt away, than this promise shall fail.

We have the promise, not uttered from memory, but before our eyes in the blessed Book. We can put our finger upon it. There is no darkness or obscurity, but all is clear as the light of heaven. It is sustained by the immutability and omnipotence of the Son of God. There is really no room for doubt or fear as to its truth, or as to its actual fulfilment. Then, too, we have an advantage which they did not possess. The promise to us is a *tried* promise. They had no one to say to them, "I know what this gift is; I have received it; pray on, you will certainly receive it." But we have the accumulated testimony of eighteen centuries, and of countless thousands of believers who have received this gift, and felt the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Comforter is promised as an abiding gift. How often I have thought of the time when the promise of the Comforter first fell upon the saddened hearts of the disciples. They might have asked, "Lord, how long will *He* abide with us? Thou hast been with us only a little while, and now *Thou* art going away. How long will the other Comforter of whom Thou hast spoken abide with us?" And O, how must their hearts have been

cheered by the announcement, "He shall abide with you for ever." Yes; *for ever!* There was to be no intermission of His presence, of His gifts, of His grace or power, in the hearts of true believers. No matter where they might be, or what might be their circumstances, this gift would be theirs; and, according to the promise, so has it been, and so will it be until the end of time.

This was gloriously realized in the first three centuries of the history of the Church, and it has been realised in every century since. It was His presence and power which kept the Church alive amid the persecutions of Pagan and of Papal Rome. He was with the martyred saints while dwelling in dungeons, or exiled, or driven into the dens and caves of the mountains, or hunted like beasts of prey, or fighting with beasts at Ephesus and Rome, or gored by wild bulls, or torn to pieces by hungry lions, or burned at the stake, or beheaded on the block. Everywhere, at all times, the Holy Ghost has abode in the Church. It was His presence which kept brightly burning the flames of Divine truth and love in the hearts of the Waldenses amid the everlasting snow and ice of the Alps. He it was who inspired and empowered Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Knox, and their followers; and, during the last century and a quarter, He guided the Wesleys and Whitefield, and their co-labourers and successors, so that they became the instruments of commencing a revival, the consummation of which will be seen only amid the glories of the millennium.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS DESCENT ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST THE EVIDENCE OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

"*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.*"—John xv. 26.

IN the very midst of His labours and toils, the Son of God declared, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."[r] But His work upon the earth was completed when He had offered himself a sacrifice for sin, and had risen from the dead, and had given to His Church her grand commission. Then, he was "taken up into heaven." He had declared unto the disciples that it was expedient for them that He should go away. For, saith He, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."[s] The bestowment of this gift, then, was made to depend upon His departure from earth to heaven. It was to be His great ascension and coronation gift.

During the ages preceding the Saviour's advent, the Holy Ghost had been given in a measure. He had inspired the prophets; He had moved them to write and speak; He had testified within them the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should fol-

r John v. 17. s John xvi. 7.

low." All good men and women in the olden time, from Enoch and Deborah down to John the Baptist and Anna the prophetess were renewed, sanctified, comforted, and sustained by the Holy Spirit. With one accord would they confess, And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

And yet all this was not that great gift to the Church and the world which was to be imparted after Christ's ascension and glorification. "The Holy Ghost was not yet [fully] given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."[t] But now Jesus had gone away. They had seen Him, ascending up toward heaven until "a cloud received Him out of their sight." He was no more with them in His bodily presence; but they *believed* what He had told them: "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God."[u] How were they to *know* it? What evidence could they receive which would prove that He was "at the right hand of God exalted?" They no longer doubted His resurrection. The many "infallible signs" which He had given them of this had scattered for ever all their doubts. But how could thay *know* that he was *glorified?* Christ Himself had given the sign: "If I go away, I will send you another Comforter."

Let us illustrate this. Suppose you have a friend who is about to sail for India. Before he leaves this country, you converse with him, and he promises you, that when he arrives in India, he will write you a letter, and send you some of the productions peculiar to that country. The day arrives for his

t John vii. 39. u John xx. 17.

departure; and amid tears and farewells, you watch the vessel until it disappears in the dim distance. You then return home, and wait in expectation of the promised letter and the promised gift. A few weeks pass away, and you begin to think the time is drawing near for the fulfilment of the promise, and you are on the anxious outlook for the postman; when, lo, on some bright morning a letter is handed you, and you see at a glance that the handwriting is that of your friend. What is the very first thought which enters your mind as you see it addressed from India? Why, you say, "No doubt he has arrived safely;" And when, a few hours later, there is brought to your door a package containing the promised specimens, you are confirmed in your belief, and there is no further room for doubt.

Now the disciples had seen their Lord and Master go toward heaven. They stood gazing upward until startled by the question of the angels; and then they turned to see them, and listen to their words of hope and cheer. Then came the period of waiting. They were not told how long they were to wait; but the assurance was given that they should not wait long. "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." We have seen how they waited, and how they prayed, and how the promised gift was bestowed. And after the first outburst of their overflowing joy, what was the deep conviction, the undoubted assurance, which took possession of their hearts? Must they not joyfully and triumphantly have said to each other, "He is ascended! He is glorified! He is seated at the right hand of God

the Father!" And how boldly did Simon Peter declare this in his wonderful sermon on the day of Pentecost; "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."[v]

Here, then, is the grand proof to the Church and the world of Christ's exaltation. There is not a sinner whose mind is enlightened, and whose heart is touched with sorrow for sin, but has in that fact a proof that Christ is "sat down on the right hand of God." There is not a Christian who has been baptized with the Holy Ghost, but who knows as well that Jesus is glorified as if he had seen Him sitting upon the throne. Each repetition of the baptism increases the assurance, until "meridian evidence puts doubts to flight" for ever.

By this the blest disciples knew
Their risen Head had enter'd heaven;
Had now obtain'd the promise due,
Fully by God the Father given.

[v] Acts ii. 33.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS COMING MADE TO DEPEND UPON CHRIST'S GOING.

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."—John xvi. 7.

THE Lord Jesus had plainly told His disciples that, before the Comforter could come unto them, He Himself must depart from them. Why was this? Had not the Holy Ghost been given to men before this? And if so, how was this new coming to differ from all His former manifestations? The Spirit had been given during each of the preceding dispensations; and, also, during Christ's sojourn with His disciples. Far back, in the patriarchal dispensation, God had said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."[x] The Holy Spirit, then, was given at that very early period in order that He might strive with man. St. Peter saith of the prophets in the old time that they "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."[y] Of John the Baptist it was said, "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."[z] And of Zacharias and Elizabeth, his father and mother, we read that they were "filled with the Holy

[x] Genesis vi. 3. [y] 2 Peter i. 21. [z] Luke i. 15.

Ghost."[a] Of Simeon we read, "The Holy Ghost was upon him; and it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ: and he came by the Spirit into the temple."[b] Our Saviour, speaking to His disciples, says of the Spirit, "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."[c]

And yet, notwithstanding these frequent references, it is expressly declared by St. John, "The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."[d] How, then, are these statements to be reconciled? The only solution of this difficulty is that, until the ascension and glorification of Christ, the Spirit was only *partially* and *temporarily* given; while, since the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost has been fully and constantly poured forth.

His most glorious manifestation under the Old Testament dispensation was as "the Spirit of prophecy." In this high and glorious office, He had opened the eyes of the prophets, so that they could look down upon the coming ages, and see the rise and fall of empires, and, especially, the establishment and glory of the kingdom of the Messiah. Inspired by His presence and power, their souls had been kindled into rapture, and made to glow with ecstasies divine. They had been transported beyond themselves; and, rapt in the visions of God, they had uttered truths which they could never have reasoned out or known. They used words which otherwise

[a] Luke i, 41, 67. [b] Luke ii. 25—27. [c] John xiv. 17. [d] John vii. 39.

they could not have used; and poured forth the most sublime poetic effusions which have held succeeding generations enraptured and entranced. And yet this gift was not always upon them; it was not abiding: and when the Spirit of prophecy departed, they were weak, and ignorant as other men. To the ancient prophet, then, the Holy Ghost was an occasional visitant, mighty in His operations, and glorious in His manifestations. Suddenly He came upon him, and as suddenly departed. Sometimes returning at different periods, and in other cases, probably, only realized once in the lifetime of the man of God. Various, also, were the means He employed in revealing Himself to the prophets, sometimes speaking to them in dreams and visions of the night, when His conscious presence would make the hair of their flesh to stand up, and all their bones to shake. Then again, He appeared unto Daniel on the banks of the Ulai, and to Ezekiel by the river of Chebar. Thus, "at sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."[e]

All the men of superior wisdom and might under the Old Testament dispensation, who did great things for God and His cause, were said to be animated and inspired with the Holy Spirit. It was He who dwelt in Joseph, giving him illumination and understanding; who upheld and directed Moses in the difficult and ofttimes embarrassing positions which he occupied; and who rested upon the seventy elders, so that they also prophesied. He inspired Bezaleel to

[e] Hebrews i. 1.

construct the tabernacle, and Solomon to build the temple. Joshua was "full of the Spirit of wisdom." "The Spirit of the LORD came upon" Othniel, and upon Jahaziel; and He "clothed" Gideon, and Zechariah. David and Jehoiada, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, and all the prophets, were inspired by His divine influence. "So that we have more than *eighty* distinct notices of the presence and power of the One Eternal Spirit before the evangelical effusion of the Holy Ghost."*

"It is observable that from the earliest ages we read of the Holy Ghost being in the world. Passing by the history of the creation, and of the deluge, we find Him first mentioned by a heathen king, which would lead us to suppose that even the wealth and civilisation of Egypt had not obliterated all traces of primitive truth.[f] Job mentions Him repeatedly.[g] Moses not only introduces His name into the record of creation, but represents Him as the Author of that skill in design, and dexterity in manufacture, which were of so much service in the construction of the tabernacle.[h] The plan and specifications of that first place of national worship, as afterwards of the first temple, appear to have been prepared under His immediate guidance.[i] On the seventy elders in the wilderness He bestowed the gift of prophecy.[j] The strength of Samson,[k] and the kingly qualities of Saul,[l] are alike represented

* The Spirit of Life, p. 23.

[f] Genesis xli. 38. [g] Job xxvi. 13; xxxiii. 4. [h] Exodus xxxi. 3.
[i] Exodus xxv. 40; 1 Chronicles xxviii. 19. [j] Numbers xi. 25.
[k] Judges xiii. 25; xv. 14.
[l] 1 Samuel x. 9, 10; xvi. 14.

as proceeding from Him: while it is manifest that He was known to David, especially as the Author of religious joy, and of that enlargement and elevation of mind which religious joy imparts. Hence he prays, "Cast me not away from Thy presence and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free [generous, princely] Spirit."[m] Isaiah ascribes to the Holy Spirit the guidance and protection of Israel in the wilderness.[n] Ezekiel repeatedly represents himself as experiencing His mighty influence.[o] Zechariah teaches the people to expect their return from captivity, not from physical force, but from the same unseen Almighty Agent.[p] When that deliverance had been effected, and the last days of prophecy were come, Haggai encourages them with this remarkable reference to the Sinai covenant: According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not."[q]*

But there is no evidence whatever that the Holy Spirit was given to the Church in these former dispensations, as He was given at the day of Pentecost, or as He is now given to believers. The prophets themselves were conscious that a brighter and more glorious dispensation was to follow their own. Hence, the frequency with which they speak of "that day." They saw the coming on of that

* The Holy Spirit: His Work and Mission. By the Rev. George Osborn, D.D.

[m] Psalm li. 11, 12. [n] Isaiah lxiii. 7—14.
[o] Ezekiel iii. 14, 24, &c. [p] Zechariah iv. 6. [q] Haggai ii. 5.

day; they anxiously desired to see the day itself; but they only saw it in the distant future. The Prophet Joel speaks of this wonderful and universal outpouring of the Spirit as occurring "in the last days." And when the Apostle Peter stood up on the day in which the Church received the mighty baptism, he said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." It was, indeed, the grand fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, the blessed realization of the Saviour's promise. Jesus had departed; He was glorified at the right hand of God; the Comforter had come, as it had been foretold. And He had come to stay—to stay "until the redemption of the purchased possession," and until the final "restitution of all things."

But He had come to give, not always the power of working miracles, or of speaking with tongues, but to be the great enlightener, regenerator, and sanctifier of the race. The Spirit is so to be in the believer, that out of his heart should "flow rivers of living water."[r] "Christ here teaches the abundant fulness to be found in Him, which will refresh us to satiety. It is, indeed, a rather strong metaphor when rivers of living water are said to flow out of the hearts of believers. Nevertheless, the sense is by no means doubtful, namely, that no spiritual blessing shall ever be wanting to them that believe. *Rivers*, in the plural number, I understand to express the multiplied graces of the Spirit which are necessary to the spiritual life of the soul. In short, here is promised to us the perpetuity of the

[r] John vii. 38.

gifts of the Spirit, as well as their abundance. But we are also admonished by this how small may be the measure of our faith when the Spirit barely distills upon us, drop by drop, that which might flow like a river, if we would give the right place to Christ; that is, should our faith render us capable of receiving Him."*

But the question now arises, Why was it necessary that Christ should go away in order to the full bestowment of the Spirit?

1. *His departure was essential in order that the apostles and Christians in all ages might learn to walk by faith.*

St. Paul saith, "We walk by faith, not by sight." And they thus walked because God had given unto them "the earnest of the Spirit." In view of this, the apostle sums up the argument by saying, "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."†

Christ had been with the disciples for three years. He had called them His "brethren," His "friends." They had heard His voice, had seen Him with their own eyes; they had looked upon Him, and their hands had handled "the Word of life." In all their doubts and difficulties, they had gone directly to Him; and they were not satisfied unless they were in His immediate presence. When He had spoken to them of going away, sorrow had filled their hearts. Upon the mount of transfiguration, Simon Peter had wanted to build three tabernacles, so that their Master

* Calvin. † 2 Corinthians v. 5, 7, 16.

might abide with them. Thus they were walking almost wholly by sight, gazing with wondering eyes upon the Saviour's miracles, or listening with admiration and awe to His parables and discourses. His visible and tangible presence seemed to become more and more necessary to them the longer He remained with them. In some instances at least they had come to think that His actual presence was essential to the performance of His mighty works. It was so with both Mary and Martha. Much as they loved Him, cordially as they believed in Him as the promised Messiah, yet they evidently had this idea when each of them said, "Lord if Thou hadst been *here*, my brother had not died."[t]

But it was the design of Christ that the new dispensation should not be sensuous, but spiritual; not one which should appeal to the eye, but one which should engage the confidence and the affections of the heart. Hence, after His resurrection, Christ said to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."[u] So the Apostle Peter says, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[v] But then, if they, in a still higher and sublimer sense than Moses, were to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible," they must be sustained by a faith which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. That they might "walk by faith and not by sight," Jesus was taken away from them; and that

[t] John xi. 21, 32. [u] John xx. 29.
[v] 1 Peter i. 8.

this faith might be inspired and maintained, the Spirit was given to them.

2. *The departure of the Lord Jesus was essential not only to a life of faith, but also that our love to Him might be spiritual and divine, and not fleshly and human.*

There was a tradition among the Jewish people that Christ, when He came, would never die. This is evident from their language to Him when He had spoken to them of His being "lifted up," which they understood, as He intended they should understand Him, as "signifying by what death He should die." "We have heard," say they, "out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?"[w] So when He spoke to His disciples of His sufferings and death, Simon Peter said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee."[x] Such was their love for His Person, that any mention of His departure from them filled them with amazement and grief. Thus it is evident that their love for Him, while, doubtless it was ardent and sincere, yet was not as pure and spiritual as it was after they received the Spirit. St. Augustine says, "It seems to me that the disciples had been occupied with the human form of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, being men, were controlled, as it were, by human affection to man. But He desired them rather to have a divine affection, and to be made spiritual instead of carnal, which a man does not become except by the gift of the Holy Spirit. This, therefore, He says, 'I send to you a gift by which

[w] John xii. 34. [x] Matthew xvi. 22.

you may be made spiritual, namely, the gift of the Holy Spirit. You cannot become spiritual unless you cease to be carnal. Now you will cease to be carnal if the bodily form is withdrawn from your eyes, that the image of God may be placed in your hearts.' For by this human form the heart even of Peter was detained when he feared that He whom he loved much would die; for he loved the Lord Jesus Christ as a man loves man, as the carnal loves the carnal, not as the spiritual loves true majesty."

It has often seemed to me as a relic of this human love when the expressions, "sweet Jesus," "dear Jesus," and the like are made use of. Without for a moment doubting the piety or the sincerity of those who habitually use such words in addressing Christ or speaking of Him, I would here express a strong doubt as to the propriety and the profit of making use of them. The apostles of our Lord never speak thus of Him, nor is there any evidence that the early Church employed this language. The same, and even greater, objections lie against the use of all images of Christ, or all attempts to form images of Him in "the chambers of imagery," that we may humanly love and embrace Him. This is one of the great errors of the Romish Church, and perhaps the very secret of her sensuous worship. On this point Archdeacon Hare says,* "But true it is that, while it is the glory of the Church of Rome to have preserved the confession of Christ, the Son of the living God, through so many ages, notwithstanding the open assaults and insidious

* Mission of the Comforter, p. 234.

snares of numberless forms of heresy, that Church has ever been especially apt to lose sight of the spiritual and divine truth in the outward human form. She has been unable to recognize how indeed it was expedient for Christ to go away. She has never been content unless she could get something present — a vicar, images, outward works, actual sacrifices, with priests to offer them up, real flesh, and real blood. She chose rather to defy the evidence of the senses than not to have an object of sense." It is true that His human soul and His human body ally Him and endear Him to all that is human in us; but we are to know Him and to love Him, after the flesh, no more.

3. *The departure of Christ was necessary in order that His Church might be led into all the truth, and especially the truth concerning the Divine character of the Lord Jesus.*

He had said to the disciples, When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all *the* truth; He shall not speak of Himself.[y] He shall testify of Me.[z] He shall glorify Me.[a] I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.[b]

We all know that while Christ was with the disciples, they were very slow of heart to understand what He said to them. There seemed to be a veil upon their minds. All that He said to them about His death, His resurrection and ascension, they did not then seem to comprehend. But the promise

[y] John xvi. 13. [z] John xv. 26. [a] John xvi. 14.
[b] John xvi. 12.

was, that the Spirit should guide them into all the truth.

I understand by this that they should be guided by Him, not into all scientific, or purely speculative truth, but the truth as it is in Jesus—"the truth as it relates to man's present and eternal well-being." Hence we see that, as soon as the Spirit was given to them, they seem to have had a new revelation of Christ. He was no longer to them merely "the man Christ Jesus," "Jesus of Nazareth," or "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" but "exalted to the right hand of God," "a Prince and a Saviour," "The Son of God," "God over all, blessed for ever!" "He was no longer a mere Teacher and Example, but transfigured into their God and Saviour and Redeemer."*

They had, as we have seen, the clearest evidence of His resurrection; they now had the most unshaken faith in His Godhead. "The history of the disciples, of the light they received, and of what they did after the ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, explains and confirms our Lord's words. None but He who had been crucified, had risen, and been glorified—the Son of God, who sat at the right hand of the Father—could be preached by the apostles as the Saviour of the whole world, and as the Lord of a new, eternal, and spiritual kingdom of heaven. None but the Son of God, who had overcome death, and returned in triumph to the Father, could the Paraclete proclaim to the world as the fulfiller of all righteousness, as the

* Hare, p. 55.

conqueror of the prince of this world, and as Him unbelief in whom is sin."* St. Augustine says: "It was necessary that the servant-form should be removed from their eyes, because they thought this alone, which they saw, to be Christ. Hence His word: 'If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I;' that is, It is necessary for Me to go to the Father, because, while ye thus behold Me, ye judge, from what ye see, that I am less than the Father, and, occupied with My created and assumed nature, ye do not perceive the equality which I have with the Father. Hence also the language, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father,' For touch makes an end, as it were, to conception. And He was unwilling that what was seen should be thought the whole, that the heart directed to Him should pause with the visible. By ascending to the Father, He was to appear as equal to the Father."

St. Peter had caught occasional glimpses of this great truth. When the miraculous draught of fishes had been secured, he fell down at the feet of his Master, overwhelmed by a sense of His wisdom and His power, and said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[c] And then, too, when Jesus asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This answer was given, however, under the influence of a direct revelation from God: "Jesus said, Blessed art thou, Simon

* Locke. [c] Luke v. 8.

Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto Thee, but My Father which is in heaven."[d] But not always was the mind of Peter so clear in its conceptions of the character of His Master. The death of Christ seems to have extinguished all hope within Simon's breast. There is great significance in his saying to the other disciples, "I go a fishing," and in their answer, "We also go with thee."[e] They knew not how they were to be employed, and hence they returned to their former means of obtaining a livelihood. But after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, they never doubted the divine character of their Lord. With the utmost boldness they preached "Jesus and the resurrection" in the very face of imprisonment, and torture, and death.

Besides this, the true character of His sufferings and death, His resurrection and ascension, as well as the way of salvation by faith in His blood, seems to have burst upon their minds. The complete fulfilment in Christ of ancient prophecies, and promises, and the sacrifices of the law, was brought out clearly to their minds. The Levitical priesthood and economy, and all the writings of the prophets, were luminous, when read in the light of the tongue of fire which sat upon each of them. Thus the entire range of Christian doctrine, recorded in the Gospels and the Epistles, and embraced by all true believers for nearly two thousand years, and which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, was now revealed unto the apostles by the Holy Spirit.

[d] Matthew xvi. 15—17. [e] John xxi. 3.

4. *The departure of the Lord Jesus was essential to the universal spread of the Gospel.*

It was hardly possible that the Gospel should be preached in the regions beyond Judæa while our Lord remained upon the earth. His presence with His disciples localized all their ideas of His operations and of His kingdom, and confined their labours to the narrow limits of the Holy Land. His command to the seventy had, indeed, positively restricted their evangelistic labours to the Jews. But His command given after the resurrection was extended to "all the world," and "to every creature." This command was based upon, and derived all its authority and emphasis from, the declaration which He then made, "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth."[f] And again He said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."[g]

"Not till He was taken away from them did they learn to feel that He was with them, not merely in Judea, but in every part of the world. So long as He was living upon earth, He might give light to the country round, like a beacon upon a hill. But it was only from His sun-like throne in the heavens that He could pour light over every quarter of the globe. It was only from thence that His voice could go forth throughout all the earth, and His words unto the end of the world. It was only when He was lifted up, that He could draw all men

[f] Matthew xxviii. 18. [g] Acts i. 8.

to His feet. Then alone could the foundations of His Church be laid so deep and wide that all nations could be gathered into it."*

To the same effect Bishop Andrews says, "As the disciples were to be sent abroad into all coasts, to be scattered all over the earth to preach the Gospel, and not to stay together still in one place, Christ's corporal presence would have stood them in small stead. He could have been resident but in one place, to have comforted some one of them, say James at Jerusalem: as for John at Ephesus, or Thomas in India, or Peter at Babylon—as good for them in heaven as in earth; all one. The Spirit which was to succeed was much more fit for men dispersed. He could be, and was, present with them all, and with every one by himself, as filling the compass of the whole world."†

There is peculiar significance here in the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In His bodily presence this could not have been verified; He could not have been with each of them always and everywhere; but by His Spirit the promise has been gloriously fulfilled to the joy and comfort of all the labourers in His vineyard. Whithersoever His servants have gone preaching the Gospel, whether among Barbarians or Scythians, bond or free; amid regions of eternal ice and snow, or amid the burning heats of tropical climes, everywhere the presence of the Lord Jesus has been realized through the agency of the Eternal Spirit.

* Hare p. 46. † Sermons on Sending the Holy Ghost.

His departure, and the consequent coming of the Comforter, were essential, also, to break down the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles. Thus the mighty barriers which had stood for ages were removed. So strong had been the prejudices of the disciples, that it required a miraculous interposition, and a special command of the Spirit to Simon Peter, to induce him to go to the house of Cornelius. Nor was it until he had preached unto the family and friends of the Centurion, and the Spirit had fallen upon them as upon the disciples at the beginning, that the truth burst fully upon his mind that Jew and Gentile were placed on an equal footing by the death of Christ. The Church at Jerusalem, in whom the leaven of Jewish prejudice still worked, contended with Peter because he had gone in to men uncircumcised, and had eaten with them. But when he had rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and had told them how the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.[b] It was thus, and by the persecution which scattered the members of the Jerusalem Church, that the sacred fire, which had been pent up in the Holy City and in Judea, now overleaped these narrow boundaries, and spread in every direction, until the world's cold heart began to melt under its power. Hence we see that the departure of Christ was essential to the full bestowment of His Spirit, and the universal extension of His kingdom.

[b] Acts xi. 2—18.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHAT THIS GIFT COMPRISES.

"*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.*"—Galatians v. 22, 23.

THE Lord Jesus is glorified. The Holy Ghost is given. Let us now fix our thought upon the character and importance of the gift which we have received. What does this gift comprise? As we look at the gift, and endeavour to realise its richness, its freeness, its fulness, we are, we must be, overwhelmed with its greatness. And yet how slow have we been to appreciate its value and importance! How often has it been undesired and unsought; yea, how often has it been despised and refused? O, wonder of wonders, that such a gift should be offered to us on the simple condition of asking for it, and yet that we are so slow to ask, and so unwilling to receive it!

But now let us try to understand the gift so plainly promised, so freely bestowed. The blessed Comforter, the ascension gift of Jesus, comes to us Himself, bringing the richest gifts. The early Church was flooded with these gifts, both in their extraordinary and ordinary forms. St. Paul enumerates them as follows: "Now there are diversities of

gifts, but the same Spirit. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues?"[i]

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation."[j]

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."[k]

The following classification of these gifts has been made, and as it serves so clearly to impress them upon the mind, I quote it entire:—

[i] 1 Corinthians xii. 4, 8—11, 28—30.
[j] Romans xii. 6, 8. [k] Ephesians iv. 11, 12.

I.

1 Corinthians xii. 8.

Class I.	Class II.	Class III.
1. *Word of wisdom.*	1. *Faith.*	1. *Divers kinds of Tongues.*
2. *Word of knowledge.*	2. *Gifts of healing.*	2. *Interpretation of Tongues.*
	3. *Working of miracles.*	
	4. *Prophecy.*	
	5. *Discerning of Spirits.*	

II.

1 Corinthians xii. 28.

1. *Apostles.*
2. *Prophets.* (See 4 in Class II.)
3. *Teachers.* (Including 1 and perhaps 2 in Class I.)
4. *Miracles.* (See 3 in Class II.)
1. *Gifts of Healing.* (See 2 of Class II.)
2. *Helps.*
3. *Governments.*
4. *Diversities of Tongues.* (See 1 of Class III.)*

But nearly all, if not all these gifts were extraordinary in their character, and limited as to the period during which they were bestowed. Nor did every member of the early Church enjoy *all* these gifts. All were not even then apostles, all were not prophets, nor teachers, nor workers of miracles.

There are, however, gifts of the Spirit which have been denominated "ordinary," and which it is the privilege of every child of God in every age to enjoy. And there are also gifts which this redeemed world will possess until the consummation of all

* Conybeare and Howson; Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. i., pp., 427, 428. Note.

things. Such are His gifts of enlightenment and conviction to the world; of regeneration, the witness of adoption, and the entire sanctification of the believer. Such also is the fruit of His indwelling and His grace; "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."[1] The first of these is the common heritage of humanity, and the second is the common heritage of the people of God; they have been enjoyed by the Church from the day of Pentecost until now, and they will continue in it until the end of time.

Nor has the Church, notwithstanding the apparent limitations of them, been entirely destitute of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. And I do not say that the power to work miracles will never again be given to the Church. There is certainly no authority for believing or saying this. All that we know on this subject is the historical fact that the power to work miracles *seems* to have been limited to apostolic days. But, as a certain writer well says, "Miracles were as the tolling of the great bell of the universe to call the attention of mankind to the service. When the service has commenced, the bell stops; but it may ring out again when the service is over, and the congregation is going home." How do we know that the Holy Ghost will never more endow His ministers with this wondrous power?

What I would, however, particularly refer to is the fact that there have been, in the history of the Church, instances of extraordinary faith, produced by the Holy Spirit, which have been marked by

[1] Galatians v. 22, 23.

extraordinary results. There are such instances in the life of the Rev. William Bramwell; of Pastor John Bort and his wife of the Department of Dordogne, in France; of Father Zeller of Bruggen, in the Grand Duchy of Baden; and of Müller, in Bristol, England. I ask, Is not the faith exhibited by these persons extraordinary? Have all Christians had this gift? Do all Christians have it? Furthermore, is it not the work of the Spirit to produce such a faith? And when such a faith is exercised, is not God pleased to own and honour it?

Yet, again, are we not warranted to expect that in the last days there will be more extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit than any which the Church or the world has ever before witnessed? I think so. What marvels or miracles may accompany such manifestations, I cannot tell. One thing, however, is certain, that the Church scarcely yet conceives the wondrous power which she may realize and wield for her grand triumph in the world. Ay, and we have scarcely more than tasted of the fulness of the Spirit—of His love, His light, His power, His peace, and His joy. O that our eyes may be opened to see the fulness of the promise! O that our hearts may be opened to embrace the promises, and to know experimentally their fulness and their power!

There can be no doubt, then, that, long as this dispensation lasts, the ungodly will have the illumination, the reproof, the conviction, and the call of the Spirit unconditionally bestowed through the mediation of Jesus Christ; and that the believer will have the witness of his forgiveness and justifi-

cation and adoption, the regenerating power, and the sealing and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Ay, more: that he shall be endued with His power to witness for Christ, and be filled with the peace and joy and hope which He imparts. Never will these gifts be withdrawn from the Church or the world; but we may expect that they will be enjoyed in greater fulness and in richer abundance as we approach the glories of the millennial period.

Our ruin'd souls repair,
And fix Thy mansion there:
Claim us for Thy constant shrine,
All thy glorious Self reveal;
Life, and power, and love divine,
God in us for ever dwell.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: CONVINCING OF SIN.

"And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."—John xvi. 8.

ONE of the most important announcements made by Christ as to the coming of the Comforter was this: "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on Me: of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."[a]

This announcement is important, because of the extent of the operations of the Comforter; He shall reprove the world. It is also important if the character of His operations is carefully regarded; He shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. The word which our translators render "reprove," has a much deeper meaning. "It is better rendered *convince;* but still this does not express the double sense which is manifestly here intended, of a *convincing* unto salvation, and a *convicting* unto condemnation; 'reprove' is far too weak, conveying merely the idea of an objective rebuke; whereas the original word reaches

[a] John xvi. 8—11.

into the heart, and works subjectively in both the above-mentioned ways."*

It was not necessary that the Comforter should come to merely *reprove* the world of sin. "The words of men, the thoughts of men, the eloquence of men, would have been sufficient to do this. Everybody who in any age has lived a holy life, or in any way been better than his neighbours, has done this. Even an unholy man may reprove sin. Poetry, in comedy and satire, had reproved the world of sin. Philosophy had reproved the world of sin, and its reproofs were severer and more clamorous, but vainer than ever, when the Spirit of God began His great work."† But the Comforter came to *convince* the world of sin, and in doing this He struck at the very root of all sin, namely, unbelief. "Of sin, because they believe not on Me." This, indeed, is the great condemning sin of the world. In view of the great provisions of the Gospel, no man is condemned solely for being a sinner, or even for being a great sinner; but because he does not believingly accept Christ as his Saviour. So, upon the other hand, no man is saved because of his virtue, honesty, or charities. He must believe in Christ, or he will come under the condemnation of the Spirit.

The plan of God for making men good, pure, and holy, differs from all the ways and means of man's devising. Men see that sin exists in themselves and others. Not only so, they reprove sin;

* Alford, on John xvi. 8.

† Mission of the Comforter, pp. 62, 63.

they despise, they hate it; they even loathe themselves on account of it. But how do they go about to remedy it? All their efforts are merely directed against the *symptoms* of the disease. If they can only succeed in allaying or in mitigating these, they are content. But have they succeeded in doing even this? Or, they have tried to purify the streams of corruption ever issuing from the corrupt fountain of the human heart. They have cast into them one remedy after another, but still they have remained corrupt. Then they have vainly tried to dry up those streams. And every expedient which the human mind could conceive has been employed to this end. But still the streams flow on as from an exhaustless fountain. Failing to purify or dry up these streams, the effort has been made to dam them up, and to hold them within certain limits.

To this end the jurisprudence of the world has been directed. Codes of law have been multiplied without number. Statutes have been enacted to cover almost every possible case of human wrong-doing; all the dreadful majesty of the law-makers, of judges, and executioners has been invoked; pains and penalties, fines and imprisonments, and even death itself, have been threatened and inflicted; and yet, while many have been kept back from the outward act which alone the law can take account of, multitudes go on still in their trespasses. The pent-up streams have burst forth, breaking down the barriers which had held them in, and spreading everywhere, in their fearful sweep, ruin and desolation. Such have been the weary and unsuccessful

efforts of the world during the by-gone centuries. Nor have men yet abandoned the vain attempt. Still they look upon sin as an accident, or as a misfortune; as the result of birth, or breeding; food, or climate; education, or the want of it: and they are applying their remedies accordingly.

But not so worketh the Comforter. He strikes at once at the very root and seat of the disease. He comes to cleanse the fountain, that its streams may be both pure and sweet. He comes to make the tree good, that its branches may be laden with ripe and wholesome fruits. To save the world from sin, He deals with the very source of all sin—unbelief.

The work of the Comforter in the heart of the unregenerate man is, first of all, to convince him of his need of Christ. He has not believed that his condition is so perilous as to make it necessary for him to come to the Lord Jesus. As a consequence of this, he has made no effort to secure an interest in the blood of Christ; and hence he has remained with all the weight of his unpardoned sins upon his soul, and with the wrath of God overhanging his unsheltered head. But when the Comforter comes to such an one, He so reveals to the sinner his condition that he sees and feels his lost and undone state; and hence he is convinced and made deeply conscious of his need of Christ. And in the long catalogue of his sins now unrolled before his eyes, the unregenerate man sees none so dark, so aggravated, and so condemning, as that of his wilful rejection of Jesus Christ.

Now the Comforter becomes to Him "the Spirit of bondage." He feels himself held in a bondage the most abject, and bowed under a burden too heavy to be borne; hence he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He is also convinced "of righteousness." Not of his own, for he has none. What he wants, what he is convinced he must have, is a spotless righteousness in which to appear before God. Such a righteousness he sees he cannot work out for himself. He has, perhaps, laboured at the loom through many a year for this purpose; but the garment, whatever it may be, which he has wrought is not *the* garment which a holy God requires. The Comforter now presents Christ before him as "the Lord, our righteousness." The Holy Spirit shows to him how Jesus Christ demonstrated His own righteousness by going to the Father; how, while the world crucified Him as a malefactor, the Father "declared Him to be the Son of God, with power by the resurrection from the dead,"[n] "and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."[o]

There is also now revealed to him the way, the plan, of God's righteousness through the atoning sacrifice of Calvary, and that it is only through the blood and righteousness of Christ that it is possible for him to be made righteous in the sight of a holy

[n] Romans i. 4. [o] Ephesians i. 20, 21.

God. And further, the means by which this righteousness may be obtained are revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. He now sees it is not by doing this or that, but by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ that the penitent sinner comes into the possession of this blood-bought righteousness. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above: or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[p]

Another part of the work of the Comforter is to convince the world "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." This does not refer primarily to the final judgment, as is generally supposed; but to a judgment which is daily and hourly being exercised. It is the conviction which the Spirit of God produces in the human soul that the judgment of this world of God's character, of Christ's atoning sacrifice, of sin and its deserved punishment, of righteousness and its absolute necessity, is all wrong; that it is diametrically opposed to God's judgment, and is condemned both by His divine law and the economy of His grace. This judgment of an ungodly world is formed and exercised under the power and influence of the Prince of Darkness.

[p] Romans x. 6, 9.

"The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."[q] They are not always conscious of this power which is exercised upon them; but the Comforter will convince them of the fearful delusion under which they have been labouring, and of the awful bondage in which they have been held.

For instance, under the influence of "the prince of this world" they have regarded sin as a trifling thing; they have looked upon the service of God as a gloomy and miserable drudgery; they have laughed at God's threatened judgments, and trifled with the terrors of His law; they have imagined that they could live in sin and die in sin, and yet obtain at last everlasting life. They have been shut up in unbelief, and are prejudged and precondemned; for "he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."[r] And so the Prince of this World is judged and condemned already, in premonition of His final and everlasting condemnation at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But let it be remembered that what the Comforter does for man is to *convince* him of these things. It is not promised that He shall produce great feeling or deep emotion, but simply convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. This conviction is frequently accompanied by deep emotions; but this is not always the case. All that the divine economy provides for, and that is enough, is to

[q] 2 Corinthians iv. 4. [r] John iii. 18.

produce in the mind of man such a conviction of sin as that he will feel his need of Christ so as to come to Him for salvation, and believe upon Him for pardon and peace. Some persons who are truly convinced of sin are greatly troubled because they do not feel deeply, or as they have seen others feel. This is a great mistake. If man is truly convinced of his sin, of his condemnation, of his exposure to the wrath of God, and of his need of Christ, this is all that is necessary to produce in him a most earnest desire for salvation, and to move him to seek it with all his heart.

By the influence of the Comforter every human soul, in every age of the world, has been made conscious of sin to a greater or less extent, and with more or less clearness. It is in view of this that sacrifices have bled among all nations, and men have undertaken pilgrimages, practised penances, lacerated their bodies, tortured their limbs, and even devoted their offspring or themselves to death, to be rid of this conscious burden. The prophet Micah gathers up into one piercing wail the universal outcry of a sin-burdened race in its desire to be delivered from sin and its fearful condemnation. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"*

* Micah vi. 6, 7.

This consciousness of sin and guilt often becomes a burden from which the sinner groans to be delivered. This has been realized in thousands of instances. Under the preaching of the word, by some providence, by the sudden awakening of the conscience, in dreams of the night, by a single word spoken by a Christian friend, or even by a little child, or by a recalling of sermons, exhortations, vows, and promises—in an instant, the sins of a lifetime have been made to appear before the eye of the sinner, and he has been made to confront the terrible consequences of his wrong-doing. Then a sense of bondage to fear, of a heavy burden, has come upon the soul; then fearful premonitions of wrath to come are realized; then the fountain of tears is unsealed; and then the cry goes up from the burdened heart, "What must I do to be saved?"

It has been often remarked of late that conviction of sin has not seemed to be so deep or so overpowering as it was in former years. One reason which has been assigned for this is that most of those who attend upon our ministrations have been religiously trained, and are consequently familiar with the truths of the Gospel, so that evangelical preaching does not produce that impression which it would if those truths were new or unknown. This I regard as a very unsatisfactory answer. Is it not rather true that the pulpits of our land have failed to proclaim clearly and fully the terrors of God's law? Have not many good ministers, men of undoubted piety, been restrained from doing this for fear of offending "ears polite?" Has there not been, is

there not *now*, a practical unbelief prevalent among the ministers and members of our Churches? Have not the thunders of Sinai been hushed, and its lightnings veiled? It is, indeed, very pleasant to speak in melting strains of Calvary; but experimentally, as well as historically, Mount Sinai comes before Mount Calvary. The Comforter not only convinces man of sin as a fact, but also of its damning nature; and when God's ministers have uttered these truths as they are in Jesus, His divine power has always accompanied the truth, and sealed it upon human hearts and consciences. We have been frightened by the derisive cry of the godless and unbelieving world against preaching the fiery terrors of the law, and we have sometimes yielded to its demands upon us to "prophesy smooth things." We are tasting the bitter fruits of this in a Christianity which is pale, sickly, powerless. Let the ministers of our land, then, and of the whole world, follow the teaching of the Comforter in His divine word, and His convictions in their hearts, and let them, "knowing the terror of the Lord, persuade men;" and then will many more go forth from our sanctuaries, crying out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The Spirit of convincing speech,
Of power demonstrative, impart;
Such as may every conscience reach,
And sound the unbelieving heart.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: WITNESSING OF ADOPTION.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."—Romans viii. 16.

THERE are two great possibilities in the condition of every adult human being, resulting directly from the redeeming work of the Son of God. The first is, every man may be *saved;* and the second is, he may *know* that he is saved. Of the first-named of these possibilities there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who believes in the sacrificial character of the death of Christ, and in the universality of the provisions of the atonement. But when we come to inquire, May a man know that he is saved, that his sins are forgiven, and that he is a child of God? many doubt, hesitate, and even deny that he may. Now, in addition to the positive evidence which I shall adduce from the word of God to sustain the position which I have assumed, there are some presumptive evidences to which the attention of the reader is desired.

1. After God has made such a provision for the salvation of the sinner at an infinite expense, and when man has complied with the conditions upon which that salvation is offered to him, it is not likely that God will leave him in doubt as to whether he is saved or not. There cannot be any reason advanced

why God should will that His creatures must be left in the dark upon a question of such vital importance to them. If it is His will that man should be saved —and who can doubt this?—it does seem likely that He should also will that man should know he is saved.

2. Further, here I am, an immortal being, hurrying on through time to meet the changeless destinies of eternity, knowing that I must dwell for ever either with God and with the angels, or with Satan and lost spirits; and is it possible that I cannot know whither I am going? Must I live in the dark, and then die in the dark? Must I go on to eternity without knowing whether I shall be among the saved or the lost? Am I not to know until after probation is ended, or until the judgment is set, whether my portion shall be among the blessed or the damned? In view of these considerations I ask, Is it not presumable that if I comply with the conditions upon which forgiveness is offered, and God for Christ's sake pardons my sins, He will in some way give me a knowledge of the fact?

3. The character of the work wrought by the Holy Spirit in the soul is such that it seems probable that He would give His testimony to the fact that such a work has been done. That it is possible for the Comforter to bear this witness in the soul, no person can reasonably doubt. If the Holy Ghost can act directly upon the heart of a man in producing conviction for sin, and the sense of bondage unto fear, then surely He can act directly upon the same heart, giving the consciousness of sins forgiven, and

of adoption into God's family. And it is reasonable to expect that He who had wrought in the soul a sense of guilt when the man was guilty, would produce in the heart a sense of pardon, now that the man is forgiven.

But will He do this work? Will He bear His witness within the heart of the actually forgiven, justified, and adopted believer, that this great change in his condition and relation has been wrought? Turn we now to the law and to the testimony. Writing to the Romans, St. Paul says, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."[t] Again, to the Galatians he writes, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."[u] Hence it appears that the fact of man's pardon and adoption is not left to conjecture, or inference, or induction; but is directly revealed unto the soul by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

In no other way can this fact be satisfactorily known. What I want to know is, Are my sins forgiven? Of course, no one who reads this book will for a moment believe that any man has the right or the power to absolve me. It is God against whom I have sinned, and it is God's forgiveness that I must have. But the question still returns, "How am I to know that God has forgiven me?" The priest, assuming to stand in the place of God, may

[t] Romans viii. 15, 16. [u] Galatians iv. 6.

say to me, "I absolve thee." But how does he know that *God* absolves me. May he not be mistaken? As he is nothing but an erring man, may he not hastily and unwarrantably pronounce me forgiven when really I am not forgiven, and so, after all his absolution, may I not still be under the wrath of God?

But there are those who will tell me that I must judge from my feelings, whether I am a child of God or not. But this would certainly be a most unsafe ground upon which to base my hopes. I am naturally inclined to put the most favourable construction upon my character and conduct, and so I may easily deceive myself. What I want is a knowledge of the fact of my forgiveness—a knowledge so clear, direct, and positive, that I need have no further doubt.

But there are yet others who will say, "You must take the word of God, and compare your character, conduct, and experience with its teachings; and if there is a harmony between the written word and your experience, then you may safely conclude that you are a child of God." Now this is well enough in its place. This is the witness of my own spirit; but what I want is God's witness or testimony. There is nothing in the Bible which tells me that *my* sins are forgiven. That blessed book gives me certain marks or signs by which I may judge whether I have the general characteristics of a child of God. But I must *be* a child of God, and I must know it, before I can bear all these marks.

I regard, then, the texts already quoted from St.

Paul's writings as distinctly teaching that God has made a provision entirely adequate to meet this felt want of my soul, and that the blessed Comforter and He only can give to me the knowledge that my sins are pardoned.

When the Son of God was upon the earth, He proclaimed directly to the forgiven one, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."[v] But Jesus is no longer here. He is gone away into the heavens, and is seated at the right hand of God. But before He went, Christ promised another Comforter to carry out His designs, and to complete His work. Now it is this Comforter which brings and bears this witness to the believer of his forgiveness and sonship. He can do this; for "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."[w] Consequently, when God forgives sin, the Eternal Spirit knows all about it. And, then, God the Father, who, for the sake of His only-begotten Son, hath forgiven and adopted the sinner, sends forth the Spirit of His Son into the heart of the forgiven and adopted one, crying 'Abba, Father.' That is, by His presence in the soul, and the witness which He bears, the Comforter calls forth the filial cry from the adopted child.

Does any one ask me, "*How* is this witness borne in the soul of the believer?" I answer, I cannot fully tell, any more than I can explain the manner in which the Spirit regenerates the human soul. The manner is unknown, but the blessed fact is clear to the consciousness of the child of God.

But what then is this witness? No uninspired

[v] Matthew ix. 2; Luke vii. 48. [w] 1 Corinthians ii. 10.

writer ever so clearly expressed this as Mr. Wesley has done in his sermon upon this subject. He says, "The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."*

But is it not possible to be deceived by this witness? May not a person think that he has such a witness, when indeed he has it not? I answer, There is no necessity whatever for deception here, nor scarcely a possibility of it to an honest and sincere soul. For, where this witness of the Spirit is made directly to the soul, there is always the confirming testimony of our own spirit. On this point Dr. Chalmers well says, "The part which our own spirit has is, that with the eye of consciousness we read what is in ourselves, and with the eye of the understanding we read what is in the book of God's testimony. And upon our perceiving that such as the marks of grace which we find to be within, so are the marks of grace which we observe in the description of that word without, which the Spirit incited, we arrive at the conclusion that we are born of God."† Now that the Spirit of God does all that Dr. Chalmers says, in the heart, and on the inspired page, we fully believe. But He does more than this. He does not leave us to an inference; He witnesses directly in the heart. And

* John Wesley; Sermon on the Witness of the Spirit.

† Lectures on the Romans, p. 275.

this blessed witness *in* the soul is guarded by the concurrent witness *of* the soul, and thus is distinguished from "the presumption of the natural mind, and from the delusion of the devil."

The Word of God sets forth certain infallible signs by which we may know whether or not the witness in our hearts is, indeed, the work of the Spirit. Wherever the witness of the Spirit is, there is also the fruit of the Spirit. It is as much a matter of consciousness whether I have or have not this fruit of the Spirit, as it is whether I now breathe and live. And if, when I am made conscious by the witnessing of the Comforter that I am a child of God, I have also the consciousness that I have "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance," then without presumption, and with filial confidence, I may cry, "Abba, Father." But without this clear witness of our sonship, we can have no clear witness of our heirship. "If children, then heirs." But I must be a child before I can be an heir. And I must know that I am a child before I can know that I am an heir. If I have doubts or misgivings upon the one point, I shall certainly have them upon the other. If I am in the dark as to my sonship, I certainly shall be in the dark as to my heirship. But if I have the witness of the Spirit within me, and the fruit of the Spirit in my heart and in my life, I am assured of my title to that inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.

Indeed, without this inward witness, there can

be no satisfactory Christian experience. See how the case stands. "We must be holy in heart and life before we can be conscious that we are so; but we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now, we cannot love God till we know He loves us: We love Him because He first loved us. And we cannot know His love to us, till His Spirit witnesses it to our spirit."* If, therefore, the Holy Ghost is not in me as an abiding Guest and Gift, I can lay no claim to the character or the experience of a Christian. But can He abide in me without my being conscious of His presence? And if He is in me, will He not bear His own testimony to His own work? What is any one, as a Christian, without the conscious indwelling of the Holy Ghost? Without His inward presence and mighty working, our religion will be nothing but a form without power, a skeleton without the living soul, a shadow without the substance, a body without the spirit.

Wherever the Gospel has been clearly and fully preached, the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit has been brought prominently forward, and this blessed experience, with various degrees of assurance, has been enjoyed. And the history of the Church shows that, wherever this doctrine has been ignored, and this experience has been wanting, there religion has degenerated into formalism.

The doctrine now under consideration is not peculiar to Methodism, but it has been strongly held and clearly taught by leading men in times

* John Wesley; Sermon on the Witness of the Spirit.

ancient and modern, and in all Churches. Mr. Wesley, whilst distinctly and forcibly announcing this doctrine, disclaims all originality, and says, "With regard to the assurance of faith, I apprehend that the whole Christian Church in the first centuries enjoyed it. For though we have few points of doctrine explicitly taught in the small remains of the ante-Nicene fathers, yet, I think, none that carefully read Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, Origen, or any other of them, can doubt whether either the writer himself possessed it, or all whom he mentions as real Christians. And I really conceive, both from the *Harmonia Confessionum*, and whatever else I have occasionally read, that all reformed Churches in Europe did once believe,—Every true Christian has the Divine evidence of his being in the favour of God."*

All important as this doctrine is, and clearly as it seems to us the Scriptures teach it, yet there have been many objections made to it, which, although they have been often answered, are still entertained by many honest and sincere persons.

The first I shall notice is that made by Dr. Dwight. He says: "I am fully persuaded that the number of these persons [who enjoy this witness] is not very great. If the Christians and ministers with whom I have had opportunity to converse, many of whom have been eminently exemplary in their lives, may be allowed to stand as representatives of Christians in general, it must certainly be true that the faith of assurance is not common."†

* History of the Religious Movement, vol. ii. p. 415.

† Sermon on the Evidences of Regeneration, vol. iii. p. 42.

But to this I would reply, There can be no reason, so far as the divine provision and the divine promise are concerned, why one Christian should have this witness and another should not. All are equally interested in knowing whether or not their sins are forgiven them—in knowing whether they are the children of God or not. There is no limitation in the provision made, or exception in the promise given. The fact that the Christians and ministers referred to did not enjoy this grace, is no evidence whatever that they might not have enjoyed it. If they had specifically sought it, and believed for it, would not they have enjoyed it as well as others? Certainly, or else God is a respecter of persons. The Bible gives no intimation whatever of any such favouritism in the family of God. I will readily admit that many who profess to be Christians have not this witness, and that some have it much more clearly than others. But I repeat that the fact they do not have this assurance is no argument whatever that they may not have it. They are resting short of their birth-right and blood-bought privileges, because their faith neither perceives nor grasps those privileges. And others have this witness dimly and occasionally, simply because their faith is weak, irregular, and staggering. Thus, while those who are strong in faith cry, "Abba, Father," others lisp it with a faltering tongue.

The New Testament gives us clearly to understand that this was the common privilege and experience of the Christians of the first century. St. Paul, writing to the Church at Rome, says: "Ye have

received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."[x] To the Galatians he writes, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."[y] To the Ephesians he writes, "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."[z] If then the early Christians did not have this witness of the Spirit to their forgiveness and adoption, the letters of the apostles to them must have been an unintelligible jargon, and they must seriously have asked one another, "What does the apostle mean? We know nothing of what he writes to us." But not so; what he wrote them was the conscious and joyous experience of their souls.

Dr. Dwight admits that "the apostles were evangelically assured of their own piety;" also, that the "first martyrs were the subjects of the same faith;" and that "there are, in every country and in every age where Christianity prevails, some persons who enjoy the faith or hope of assurance."* But I think it has been clearly shown that if the apostles had this assurance, then the Christians to whom they wrote must have had it also. Almost always when speaking of this they join themselves with the body of believers. "The Spirit beareth witness with *our* spirit." "*We* know that if *our* earthly house of this

[x] Romans viii. 15, 16. [y] Galatians iv. 6. Ephesians i. 13; iv. 30. * Theology, vol. iii, pp. 41, 42.

tabernacle were dissolved, *we* have a building of God." "*We* know that *we* have passed from death unto life." And if it is true that some persons in every age enjoy this assurance, why may not all Christians enjoy it?

It is objected, again, "That some persons who have professed to enjoy this witness have subsequently backslidden in heart and in life, and thus have brought disgrace upon the cause of Christ." The fact is admitted. But it does not at all affect the truth of the doctrine. Indeed, if the objection proves anything, it proves too much. For these persons while professing to have this witness, or assurance, professed also to be Christians. Now, if their falling into sin proves that the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit is false, it proves likewise that the Christian religion is false. I am aware that those who hold to the Westminster Confession of Faith have difficulty in reconciling this doctrine of assurance with that of the unconditional perseverance of the saints. It is well known that their idea of assurance amounts to this, that the man who has it is not only assured of his present, but also of his eternal, salvation. Very different from this is the Wesleyan doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, which teaches us that the believer in Jesus may and does know that his sins are now forgiven, and that he is now a child of God. But it gives him no assurance of his final and unconditional salvation. On the contrary, he is taught that this witness is only to be retained by cleaving to Christ and diligently keeping all God's commandments even unto the end; and

that if he is unwatchful, and yields to temptation, he will lose this divine witness, and, unless he is restored by penitence and faith, he will ultimately perish.

And in teaching this doctrine, we follow in the footsteps of an inspired apostle who thus wrote to them that were sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ; But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.[a]

Again, it is objected that if we have a consciousness of faith, preceded by true repentance, we may properly conclude that we are forgiven; in other words, "I have repented; I have believed; therefore I am forgiven." The conclusion is correct, provided that the premises are true. Now, repentance and faith are simply the conditions of salvation, and in no sense the evidence of it. But the question will arise, "How am I to know that I have truly and acceptably repented and believed?" I may think that my repentance and faith are sincere and genuine, and yet I may be deceived. If we must be left to the evidence of our own spirit as to our having properly performed the conditions of salvation, we must be left to doubts and fears on the one hand, or to presumptuous professions of piety on the other. The weak, the timid, the earnest and sincere, will doubt whether they have truly repented or not; while the bold and presumptuous

[a] Jude 20, 21.

will rest satisfied with a very slight and superficial work.

There is, finally, a "hackneyed objection," as Mr. Arthur well calls it, namely, "That it is presumption for any one to say that he is a child of God." To this he replied, "It never is presumption to acknowledge what you are. Had David never been taken from the sheep-cot and made king, it would have been presumption in him to say that he had; but when it was the case, he was in gratitude bound to own and to commemorate the mercy showed to him. So, if a man has not been delivered from the dominion of sin and adopted into the family of God, for him to say that such is the case, is presumption; but if he has, then not to praise his Redeemer for it, would be ingratitude. Saying that it is presumption for *any one* to call himself the child of God takes it for granted that no one is; or else it is absurd."*

In beautiful and blessed contrast to all these objections stands the great and glorious Gospel truth as explained and enforced by the Wesleyan theology. Here we see that the witness of the indwelling Spirit is primary, giving to the pardoned sinner the knowledge that his sins are forgiven, and that he is a child of God. Then there naturally follows the indwelling of the Spirit, His gracious fruit confirming the inward testimony. Thus, on the one hand, he is not left to guess, to imagine, to infer, that he is a child of God, for as he *is* a child, he knows it, and rejoices in the blessed assurance; nor, on the other hand, is he left to presumption,

* Tongue of Fire, pp. 190, 191.

fanaticism, or folly, for the testimony of his own spirit is necessary to confirm the inward witness.

His Spirit to us He gave,
And dwells in us, we know;
The witness in ourselves we have,
And all its fruits we show.

Our nature's turned, our mind
Transformed in all its powers;
And both the Witnesses are joined,
The Spirit of God with ours.

For a Chronological List of Reformers and Martyrs, Episcopalian, Puritan, and Nonconformist Divines, who have held and taught the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit to a believer's adoption, see Appendix.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: REGENERATING THE PENITENT.

"He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."—Titus iii. 5.

THE law of Regeneration, or of the new birth, is absolute in the kingdom of God. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[b] No language could more clearly express the deep, the tremendous necessity of this work. Now if all that is meant by this work is the sprinkling of a few drops of water upon the brow, or even a submergence into "the floods of great waters;" or if man, by the mere exercise of his will, could accomplish what it requires or imports, then we might exclude the necessity of a divine agency. But if we carefully look at what this change is, we shall see that no other power can accomplish it. See what it is. A man "must be born again," literally, born from above —from heaven—from God. This is further expressed by the Saviour in verse 5, when He says, "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit" —of water, as the outward and visible sign, and of the Spirit, as the divine and efficient Agent—"he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

We shall be readily convinced of the greatness of

[b] John iii. 3.

this work, and of the necessity of a divine agent for its performance, if we look carefully at the language by which it is described in the word of God. It is called a *translation* from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.[c] It is called a *new creation*, in which old things have passed away, and all things have become new.[d] It is called a *quickening*, by which life is given to them that were dead in sins.[e] It is frequently spoken of as a change from sin to holiness, from bondage to liberty, from darkness to light, and from death to life. Now, a work so great as this is certainly beyond the power of men or angels to perform. Nowhere in the word of God is this work ascribed to man, or declared to be within his power to accomplish. Nowhere is it even hinted that it can be wrought by baptism alone.

When we bring our children to our churches to receive the baptismal dew upon their brows, it is not that any change can be effected in their character by this act. But it is to acknowledge that our offspring inherit the rich benefits of the redeeming work of Christ, and that they are the children of God. Baptism does not make or constitute our children the children of God. They are already His children in Christ Jesus before baptism. And while it is the duty of parents to recognize this existing relation by the solemn and impressive rite of baptism, yet the relation of the child toward God and heaven is just the same before baptism as after. Subsequent to baptism, the child doubtless sustains a different re-

[c] Colossians i. 13. [d] 2 Corinthians v. 17. [e] Ephesians ii. 5.

lation to the visible Church, and the parents have acknowledged the obligations which rest upon them to give to their child a religious training; but otherwise no change whatever is produced.

Regeneration is a work which none but God can perform. "If it were only a little mending, a little patching, a little turning over of a new leaf, then man might do this."* But when it is a translation, a creation, a resurrection, God must do it. The cause must always be adequate to the production of the effect. And where, I ask, has this moral and spiritual transformation ever occurred without the direct agency of the Eternal Spirit? Truly has Mr. Wesley said, "Nothing but that power which made a world can make a Christian."

What wonders has the Comforter wrought in the regeneration of human souls! Men who have been guilty of nearly every sin—bold blasphemers, relentless persecutors, licentious, covetous, extortioners,—have been renewed, purified, and saved; have lived and died in the enjoyment of God's favour; and have showed forth in life and death the sweetness, the purity, and the power of saving grace. It was so in the early history of the Church. As to the Corinthians. After the apostle had enumerated nearly every class of sinners, he says: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."† As to the Ephesians. "In time past they were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein they walked according to

* Ryle. † 1 Corinthians vi. 11.

the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air; and they were the children of wrath." But they had been "quickened, and raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."[g] As to the Colossians. Formerly, they had been guilty of "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." But they were now "risen with Christ," had "put on the new man," and were "the elect of God, holy and beloved."[h] As to the Thessalonians. They had been worshippers of "idols," but they had turned from them "to serve the living and the true God." And unto them in their new estate St. Paul wrote, "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord, so that ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia." And the apostle gives the key to this marvellous change, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost."[i] And these miracles of grace have been repeated in every age.

Countless multitudes have been thus regenerated and transformed. The instances are too numerous, indeed, to allow any more than a reference to them. They have been occurring all through the ages; and, blessed be God! they are now daily occurring. The character of the work wrought in many, very many instances, as to its reality and genuineness and blessed results, cannot be doubted by any honest mind. The work wrought has been evidently not the work of man, but of God. It is no argument against these

[g] Ephesians ii. 2, 3, 5, 6. [h] Colossians iii. 1, 5, 7, 10, 12.
[i] Thessalonians i. 5, 6, 7, 9.

statements that many who have professed to be Christians were not what they ought to be. This is readily admitted; and yet the fact remains undisputed that there *are* many who once "were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly," and are now "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, amongst whom they shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."[j] Now what has effected this change? Certainly it is not philosophy, neither any mere system of ethics. This change is not the result of the self-determining power of the will; and least of all is it a development—for that would only have been from bad to worse. We must therefore conclude that this is the work of God, and that the change from death to life is the result of the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost.

Spirit of Holiness,
  Let all Thy saints adore
Thy sacred energy, and bless
  Thy heart-renewing power.

[j] Philippians ii. 15, 16.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: SEALING THE BELIEVER.

"In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."—Ephesians i. 13, 14.

BELIEVERS not only have the witness of the Spirit as to their forgiveness and adoption, but they are also sealed by the Spirit. This work is frequently referred to in the New Testament. St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."[k] To the Corinthians he says, "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."[l] To the Ephesians he writes, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."[m] God's people, then, are a sealed people. The world knoweth us not.

The seal has been in use from a very remote

[k] Ephesians i. 13, 14. [l] 2 Corinthians i. 21, 22.
[m] Ephesians iv. 30.

antiquity. We read of its use far back in the patriarchal times.[a] It is the instrument by which letters and other writings are stamped and ratified as evidence of their authenticity; and is used by kings, states, corporate bodies, and individuals. It is not only used upon writings, but also stamped upon articles of value, and at the present day is employed largely in commerce and trade. The design of its use is to signify that the writings are authentic, actually given by the person or corporation or state which employs it, no other person or parties having a right to use it, and thus all fraud is prevented. It is also used to confirm an agreement, or ratify a covenant. Again, it is used to mark as one's own what really is ours, and to make secure that which is thus marked. The process itself is simple. The instrument, with some letter or device or image engraven thereon, is stamped upon a wafer or a piece of wax, upon lead, or heated iron, and thus the exact impress of the seal is made upon that which is stamped.

Now, believers are said to be thus sealed by the Spirit of God, and this denotes that "they are the ascertained property of God, for this is the idea conveyed by the affixing of a seal. He has received them, He claims them, He gives His attestation to the fact that they are His. It cannot, either to themselves or to any considerate observer, be any longer doubtful among what description of persons they are to be classed, nor to whom they belong."[*]

[a] Genesis xxxviii. 18.

[*] Walton on the Witness of the Spirit, p. 51.

This sealing is by no means an evidence of final and unconditional salvation. It marks and secures the one who is now a child of God as His property. But if the Spirit is grieved by our sins or our slothfulness, the impress of this seal may be effaced from the soul. This sealing needs to be frequently renewed, for it is by no means true that, *once* sealed, we are *always* sealed. It is only while the Comforter abides in the soul that the sealing is kept clear and uneffaced; but if He depart from us, then the seal will also be removed. Hence, although, as we have seen, the Ephesians were sealed, yet were they admonished not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom they were sealed. And that their first sealing did not carry with it unconditional perseverance is but too evident from the Saviour's message, charging them with having "left their first love," and threatening to remove their "candlestick out of its place" unless they repented.

These facts show the absurdity of all theories of sealing which make the seal final or indelible. Like every other part of the Spirit's work, the sealing needs to be kept up. Like His witness, it abideth not any longer than we keep from grieving Him. The Holy Spirit soon *unseals* every one who makes a bad use of His comforts. "And in unsealing the inconsistent and slothful, he evinces as much love as when He seals most fully the diligent and devotional."* As to the finality of this sealing by the Spirit, the truth lies in few words: the seal need not be broken, yet it may; it may be broken, yet it need not.

* Philip, On the Love of the Spirit.

This indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the believer, witnessing and sealing, is the earnest of his heavenly inheritance. Hence, as already quoted, "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." Again, "Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."° The sealing of the Spirit and the earnest of the Spirit are distinct from each other, and yet always co-exist.

The word *earnest* signifies, "A part paid or delivered beforehand, as money or goods under a contract, as a pledge and security for the whole. Thus earnest, or earnest-money, is a first payment or deposit, giving promise or assurance of a full payment, and serving also to bind the seller to the terms of agreement."* It signifies also the first-fruits, which give the promise of the harvest to come.

There are two things, then, especially, which the Spirit thus furnishes to the believer: first, a *pledge* of his inheritance; and, secondly, a *foretaste* of its bliss. The Spirit's witness to our sonship gives us a title to heaven, for "if children, then heirs;" His sealing confirms our sonship and heirship; and thus, so long as we have the witness and the seal of the Spirit, we have the pledge of heaven. The child of God, justified and sealed, is not at once taken to heaven. He is left here to struggle against hosts of foes, to battle with adverse influences, and to travel, often a weary road,

° 2 Corinthians v. 5. * Webster.

to his heavenly home. But, stranger and pilgrim though he be, often poor and despised, yet in the depths of his soul he has a title to a mansion, a crown, a throne. He is not in heaven, but he has the pledge of heaven in his soul. That pledge is given to him, and the inheritance is sure, upon one simple condition: "Be thou faithful unto death." With this condition fulfilled, or while fulfilling it, he is as sure of heaven as if he were now by the throne of God. And this was not only a pledge to the early Christians, but it is a pledge to the whole body of believers "until the redemption of the purchased possession," on the morning of the resurrection.

But not only is this earnest of the Spirit in the soul as a *pledge*, it is there also as a *foretaste*. Just as the first-fruits were a foretaste of the harvest, and a part of the harvest, so the Spirit is a foretaste of heaven—it is "heaven begun below." It is, indeed, only a small part of the inheritance, a slight foretaste, but yet it *is* a part. The first-fruits of the Jewish harvest might have been carried in the hands, or in a small basket or bag, while the full harvest itself filled the largest granaries and barns; and so a few pounds may secure, as well as foreshadow, the payment of many thousands, and the possession of that for which they are paid. Our poor hearts here can hold but little of heaven even when filled to the utmost, but that little is sweet beyond expression. It is the joy of the glorified; it is the joy of the angels; it is "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" more than this, it is "the joy of the Lord."

And did we live nearer to God, how much more of this earnest might we enjoy even here! If the film of worldliness were removed from our eyes, if our faith were more vigorous and clear-sighted, how would the glory break over our souls! how would the joys divine well up in our hearts! We permit ourselves to be robbed of much heavenly joy by our sloth, our indifference, and our unbelief. Well does Rutherford say in one of his letters, "I dare avouch the saints know not the length and largeness of the sweet earnest, and of the sweet green sheaves before the harvest, that might be had on this side of the water if we would only take the pains. It is our folly to postpone all till the term-day, seeing abundance of earnest will not diminish any thing from the principal sum."

As the first-fruits of the harvest revealed to the Jew the character of the coming harvest, so the joy in the Holy Ghost which the saint now has in his heart tells him of the infinite and endless joys of heaven. That is the fulness, this is the taste. That is the ocean, this is the drop. That is the endless fruition, this is only the beginning. That is the perfect day, this is only the day-dawn. But if the drops are so sweet, what will the ocean be? If the taste is so ravishing, what will the fulness be? "Heaven is only the maturer, brighter, fuller development of that state which has begun in the individual heart. Joys here are like a few flowers retaining their Eden fragrance, that the spirit may long for the climes where they bloom perpetually. They are a few notes of heavenly harpers, that the

soul may be led to desire to join in the eternal jubilee. They are glimpses of glory in which the soul may see those hours which, like the hours on the sun-dial, are measured only by sunshine, and of which, through eternity, there will be no end."*

Thus the sealed believer has both the pledge and the foretaste of heaven, until he enters upon his everlasting inheritance, and partakes, at the fountain-head, of fulness of joy, and pleasures which shall be for evermore.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below;
Celestial fruit on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.

* Cumming's Voices of the Night, p. 50.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: INTERCEDING FOR THE SAINTS.

"We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered: and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, that He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."—Romans viii. 26, 27.

THE question at once arises, "In what sense does the Comforter make intercession for us?" To this I would answer, His intercession is entirely different from that which Christ, as our great High Priest, makes for us. The Saviour's intercession is based upon His own merits; the Comforter's intercession is occasioned by our weakness. Christ's intercession is before the throne; the Spirit makes intercession within our hearts. Christ intercedes for us as our Advocate; the Spirit as our Helper. The Lord Jesus speaks to God for us; the Holy Spirit helps us to speak to God for ourselves. The intercession of Christ for us is unconditional; that of the Comforter is dependent upon our willingness and desire to come to God.

1. First, then, His office is to help us to pray. When man is made conscious of his sinfulness, he is

at the same time made conscious of his helplessness. His first thoughts are, "I cannot pray; I do not know how to pray; how dare such a sinful worm as I am approach unto God?" With these reflections, his whole soul shrinks from an interview with a holy God. Like the Publican, he stands afar off, not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, the dwelling-place of infinite purity; but, smiting upon his agonized breast, he cries out from a distance, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

There are also many periods in the history of the child of God when, assaulted by the powers of darkness, or overwhelmed with trials, or crushed by the bereaving stroke, or sunk into the lowest depths of humiliation by a sense of his vileness and unworthiness, he feels that he cannot pray. It is then that the Comforter comes in with His Divine help. The timid, shrinking heart is now encouraged by His presence and aid, and emboldened to speak out its wants, or at least to groan out its desires.

"The word translated 'helpeth' signifies to lay hold of anything, as of a beam or burden, together with another. In ourselves we know not what to pray for, or how to pray. But the Holy Spirit of God which dwelleth in us, knowing our wants better than we, Himself pleads in our prayers, raising us to higher and holier desires than we can express in words, and which can only find utterance in sighs and aspirations. But although these yearnings are inexpressible in words, the Searcher of hearts recognizes in them what is the mind of the Spirit, because these inarticulate pleadings of the Holy

Ghost, in and for His saints, are in perfect unison with His own mind."*

2. The Comforter, by His Divine illumination, makes us conscious of our condition and our needs, so far, at least, as we can bear to see them. We know not our actual condition, nor the deep and alarming necessities of our being; and, probably, we could not bear to see ourselves as we are seen by the Eye of infinite purity. It is natural for us to put the most favourable construction upon everything appertaining to our character and state. Nor does the true Christian always realize his privileges, and the glorious possibilities which lie before him. Hence the Holy Spirit shines in upon the darkness of the mind, creates the sense of want, inspires the soul with earnest longings, causes us to "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and thus He leads us up to God. It is in view of this that we read of Christians "praying in the Holy Ghost," and of their "praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

3. Here, then, we see the source of those unutterable groanings of which the true penitent and the true Christian are often conscious. They are not natural to man. They do not arise spontaneously in the human soul. They are begotten by the Holy Ghost. They are the results of His mighty intercession. They occur in great crises of our history and experience. It is in the midst of them that the soul rises up to meet God, to take hold upon His Omnipotence, to test the power of the blood which

* The Spirit of Life, pp. 154, 155.

cleanseth from all sin, and to enter upon the higher walks of the Christian life. And yet, in its enlarged desires, in its piercing sense of need, the soul can find no language in which to express its struggling emotions. Prostrate in the dust at the foot of the throne, the lips are dumb; words are lost, or fail to utter what now is so deeply felt, and naught but groans and sighs escape the breast of the burdened and troubled one. So Hannah prayed: "She spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard."[p] The secret of all this was she was a "woman of a sorrowful spirit;" and she "poured out her soul before the Lord."

"That in those moments when the soul turns with deepest ardour to its original, it is not that which is human in man, that rises Godward, but the Divine Spirit in the human breast which seeks to meet God, the profound thinkers of every clime have been aware."*

4. In such intercession there is frequently an assurance accompanying, or immediately following it, that the prayer is heard. The experience of God's saints abundantly supports this statement. After a period of intense longing, of unutterable groanings of soul, either for themselves or for others, suddenly, but with fullest assurance, there is realized the faith that the prayer is heard, that the answer is granted. So when John Knox prayed, "Give me Scotland, or I die," he rose up from his knees assured that his prayer had prevailed with God.

[p] 1 Samuel i. 13. * Tholuck.

But time would fail to tell of all the instances on record. Every earnest saint in all the ages has known the truth of this, although this fact in his experience may have been known only to himself and his God. The answer is in the prayer. The same Spirit which creates the desire and produces the groanings of soul is present with the answer. The desire has come from God; it is in accordance with the will of God; the answer is sure.

My prayer hath power with God: the grace
Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face:
I see Thee face to face and live!
In vain I have not wept and strove;
Thy nature and Thy Name is Love.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: LEADING GOD'S CHILDREN.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Romans viii. 14.

BUT what is it to be led by the Spirit of God? It will readily be seen that a right answer to this question is of the greatest importance. An error here may lead the mind very far astray, either into the vagaries of mysticism on the one hand, or the delusions of fanaticism on the other. There have been persons at various periods in the history of the Church who have imagined that they were, and declared themselves to be, under the guidance of the Spirit; and yet they have been guilty in some instances of the most fanatical conduct, and in others, of the most abominable excesses. I would inquire, then, Is it possible for us to *know* when we are led by the Spirit of God? Can His guidance be distinguished from the actings of our own minds, or the decisions and determinations of our own wills? Or, on the other hand, are all who profess to be led by the Spirit fanatics and deceivers?

The word of God names several conditions the existence of which is essential to the enjoyment of this leading and guidance. And, first of all, it is only those who are sons of God who are thus led. This implies that they have repented of their sins,

have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have experienced His justifying and renewing grace. It involves, also, the further fact that there is a complete submission of the soul to the dictates and control of the Divine Spirit. In other words, if the Holy Spirit actually leads a man, he must be willing to be led just in the way the Spirit would have him go.

It would, indeed, be a great comfort to many persons if they could convince themselves and others that the way in which they go, and the actions which they perform, are from the promptings and leadings of the Holy Ghost: if, in other words, they could practice the most gross immoralities, the most impure conduct which their base hearts or their corrupt passions incline them to, and yet throw the responsibility upon the Holy Spirit. Some have ventured so far as to do these very things. Their blasphemy is of the most fearful character, for they are ascribing the works of the devil to the Spirit of God, and thus are bringing upon themselves the terrible judgments of heaven. The word of God gives us clearly to understand that no person who performs an unholy or impure action can possibly be led to do this by the Holy Ghost. The infinite purity and holiness of His character renders such a thing utterly and for ever impossible.

But, on the other hand, He can only lead a person to do that which is right and just, and true and good. If any man's conduct varies from these principles, no matter what his professions may be as to his being led by the Spirit of God, "he is a liar, and the truth is not in him." There are but two spirits in the

world which lead and control men's minds—the Spirit of light and the spirit of darkness; the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error; the Spirit of God and Satan. These are in direct and eternal antagonism. Satan, it is true, may appear as an angel of light, but he is no less a devil under this garb than in his own thunder-scarred deformity. Error may put on the garb of truth, but it is error still. When, therefore, the Spirit of God leads a man, He leads him to be good, to do right, to believe the truth and embrace it. The promise is emphatic, "He shall guide you into all the truth," not into error, not into folly, not into sin.

The question may fairly arise, "How am I to know what is truth?" "The theological world," it may be said, "is a Babel of confused opinions and theories; science seems to be opposed to some of the teachings of the Bible, and the wisest and the best men differ widely upon some important passages of Scripture; how, in the midst of all this confusion, am I to perceive the truth?"

Let me say here that the Bible does not profess to teach philosophy or science. It does not attempt to formulate any system of astronomy, geology, botany, or chemistry. Its allusions to those questions which belong to philosophical or scientific investigation, are made in the language of the existing ideas and knowledge of the people among whom its truths were primarily uttered, and are merely occasional and incidental. But it does profess to teach man about God, His character, and relations to His creatures; about man, his origin, his character, his

fall, his redemption by Christ, and his destiny. Upon these great questions the Bible speaks out clearly and unmistakably.

"To us at this day this word has come, and to us at this day the anointing from the Holy One flows down. For you, for me, (thank God!) the teaching of the Spirit remains. It remains for the servants and the handmaids; and many an obscure and lowly brother in the streets around us can say for himself, as truly as St. Paul could say, 'I have received the Spirit that is of God, that I may know the things which are freely given me of God.' But one who thus speaks can know that his convictions are really the teaching of the Spirit of God only so far as they correspond with the eternal types of truth, which ascertain to us what the teaching of the Spirit is. Now, as in the apostolic days, he which is spiritual can show that he is so only 'by acknowledging that the things which' these appointed teachers 'wrote to us are commandments of the Lord;' for the gift of the Holy Ghost to others is not a gift whereby they originate the knowledge of new truths, but a gift whereby they recognize and apprehend the old unchanging mystery, still receiving afresh the one revelation of Christ, ever approaching, never surpassing the comprehensive but immovable boundaries of the faith once delivered to the saints. This is the gift which makes the written word a living word, which fills a Church with joy, and seals a soul for glory."*

Again, The Spirit of God never leads a man to believe any thing contrary to the word of God, or to

* Bernard's Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament.

do anything contrary to its teachings. It is here that we have an all-sufficient barrier against error and fanaticism. If any person thinks that he is led by the Spirit of God, he is to test his impressions by the word of God. If the convictions, impressions, or inclinations of his mind and heart are in accordance with the eternal truths of that word, then he may safely follow them, and properly conclude that it is the Spirit of the Lord who is leading and guiding him. But if they are not in harmony with the word, then the sooner he gets rid of them, the better it will be for himself and for all concerned; for it is not the Spirit of God who is guiding him, but the spirit of "that wicked one" which is endeavouring to lead him astray. Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they are of God.[q]

There are those who profess to be entirely governed by their impressions, and who ascribe all those impressions to the Holy Spirit. Such governance will commonly mislead those who follow it. Nothing is more variable and uncertain than our feelings and impressions. We are subject to a thousand influences both from within and without. Some of our impressions are healthy and right, others are morbid and wrong. Some are from a sound normal condition of our physical system, and others from its deranged and disordered conditions. Some are from the world without us, and some are from the world within us. Some are from the Spirit of God, and some are from the devil. We are to try our impressions by the Word of God.

[q] 1 John, iv. 1.

And here comes in that right, aye that duty, of private judgment in reading and endeavouring to understand the Scriptures. God has given to His intelligent creatures powers of reason, of judgment, of understanding. These are to be brought into exercise in reading the Word of God, in humble reliance upon the promised aid of the Divine Spirit. Given, then, the Word of God in our hands, the Spirit of God in our hearts, and our reason duly enthroned in our minds, and an honest wish to know the truth, and no man will go far wrong. But any one who relies upon mere impressions will go astray into the wildest fancies, or the grossest irregularities, or the most mortifying blunders.

But all this, while it guards, does not war against the doctrine of the guidance of the Spirit. In every age this great truth has been taught, and this experience has been realized. Enoch, in his three-century walk with God; and Abraham, leaving Ur of the Chaldees, and going out under the Divine guidance, not knowing whither he went, were led by the Spirit. David frequently refers to this truth, and dwells upon it with holy rapture: "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death."[r] "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."[r] "Thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."[r]

All these Scriptures clearly teach a Divine leadership, a Divine guidance. Erring man may be led by the Spirit of God into all truth and righte-

[r] Psalm xlviii. 14; lxxiii. 24; cxliii. 10.

ousness; he may be led through the wildering mazes of this world up to the gates of pearl and the celestial mansions. And if we oftener sought His guidance, if our hearts were only more willing to follow where He would lead, how many errors, straits, difficulties, and troubles we might avoid. How should we be led by the side of the still waters, up to the lofty altitudes of communion with God, down into the hallowed depths of love divine, and into the immeasurable riches of Divine grace! But we so often want our own will and our own way; and when the Spirit would lead us, we shrink back, and refuse to follow, because the way looks to us rough and thorny, or a cross lies directly in the path. We too seldom think that the way of the cross is the way to the crown, and that the rough and thorny path leads upward to the golden streets. If we fail to follow where the Spirit leads, we are losers always and losers in every way.

This blessed fact of a Divine Leader and Guide is not only one of the deepest interest and importance, but also of the greatest satisfaction and comfort. Full well do we know that where He leads, there it is not only safe for us to follow, but it is best for us to go. Sometimes the way is one of difficulty, trial, and sorrow. We may shrink, at first, from entering upon it; but if we follow where our Lord doth lead, all will be well. Jesus, the Divine Jesus, "was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Fierce, determined, persistent were Satan's attacks; but when the struggle was over, "angels came and

ministered unto Him."[1] So will it ever be with us. In the wildernesss of life the Spirit may lead us to scenes of fierce temptation; but, the conflict ended and the victory won, angel pinions will fan our heated brows, and angel hands will minister to our comfort. However difficult or dangerous the way in which we are led, the result will be peace, and comfort, and joy. But sometimes, O how often! He will lead us by the still waters, and make us to lie down in the green pastures, where Eden flowers bloom and shed their fragrance all around, where the skies are bright and cloudless, and the air is burdened with celestial melodies.

But, however rough, or thorny, or dark, the way may be at times along which the Spirit leads us, yet if we are assured that it is His hand which is guiding our steps, we may walk on with the utmost confidence. What though the billows of some Red Sea may roll darkly before our eyes, and seem to forbid our advance even when the voice of God bids us go forward! If we only obey the Divine command, those dark billows will be rolled up into walls of adamant; "the depths will be congealed in the heart of the sea," a highway shall be there, over which we shall pass to sing songs of victory on the shore that lies nearest to Canaan. Or, if we are led into a den which has quivered and shaken with the thundering roar of hungry lions eager for their prey, that den will be a downy couch prepared by angel hands after they have locked the lions' jaws; and through the livelong night their wings will

[1] Matthew iv. 1, 11.

canopy our heads, and their gleaming spears will defend us from harm. We may be led into some seven-times heated furnace of affliction in obeying His Divine command. But even then the fire-flame will become as harmless as gilded drapery while we walk triumphantly with our Lord in the midst of the fire. Yes, if He lead us there, even martyr-tortures, martyr-dungeons, and martyr-stakes shall be turned into scenes of rapturous joy and triumph. Thus the Comforter leadeth us sometimes to mountain-tops radiant and rosy with the light of God, and sometimes into valleys of humiliation, now full of sighs and groans, and then ringing with shouts of victory and conquest. But, blessed Comforter, only let us know that *Thou* leadest us, and we will follow Thee!

By Thine unerring Spirit led,
We shall not in the desert stray;
We shall not full direction need,
Nor miss our providential way;
As far from danger as from fear,
While Love, Almighty Love is near.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: SANCTIFYING GOD'S PEOPLE.

"*Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, and obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*"—1 Peter i. 2.

THE Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier. So the word of truth uniformly declares. To the Thessalonians St. Paul writes, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."[t] St. Peter, writing to the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," calls them "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus."[u]

But the question arises, "What is that sanctification which the Spirit of God accomplishes in the soul of the believer?" The word "sanctify" has two meanings, which are correlative, the one implying, but not necessarily including, the other. One is "to set apart," "devote," "consecrate;" the other is "to hallow," or "to make holy." The word is frequently used in both senses in the Scriptures.

[t] 2 Thessalonians ii. 13. [u] 1 Peter i. 2.

The first-born of Israel were sanctified to God; that is, set apart, devoted to the Lord.[v] They were redeemed, and therefore set apart. So also the tabernacle, and afterward the temple, the priests, the altars, the sacrifices, were sanctified, or set apart, for sacred uses and purposes. The word is also used in the sense of cleansing from sin, or making holy; and in the New Testament, when applied to believers, it always signifies purity, holiness. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."[w] "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."[x] "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[y] "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate."[z]

Among all evangelical Christians these definitions are regarded as entirely in harmony with the divine teaching, and there is no difference of opinion as to the nature of the work, about the truth and the blood by which it is accomplished, or as to the Almighty Agent who alone can perform it. The only real difference of opinion among them is as to the *time* when it may be performed, experienced, and enjoyed. This, however, I shall notice more fully hereafter.

[v] Exodus xiii. 2. [w] 1 Corinthians vi. 11.
[x] Ephesians v. 25, 26. [y] 1 Thessalonians v. 23.
[z] Hebrews xiii. 12.

At present let us look at the work of the Spirit in effecting this wonderful transformation in the human soul.

1. The Holy Spirit convinces the believer of the necessity of this work. This He does in two ways: (1.) By His inward operations upon the soul, revealing to it the corruptions which remain after the work of regeneration has been performed; and, (2.) By shedding His light upon the sacred page, thus revealing unto the believer his duty and privilege.

The theory which to some minds appears so beautiful, that men are *entirely* sanctified when they are justified and regenerated, is regarded by nearly the whole Christian Church as in conflict with the teachings of God's word, and contradictory to the universal experience of the Church of God. It is possible for us to conceive a person whose faith at the time of his experiencing justifying and renewing grace grasps the whole work, and then, of course, it would be done; and it may be also that in the progressive development of Christian doctrine, and in the increasing light which will shine upon this question, such experience will become more general; but up to this time such instances have been exceedingly rare.

The common experience of Christians is substantially as follows: After the first gush of the raptures of pardon, and the first clear consciousness of "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," which is prolonged sometimes for days and even weeks—there is revealed to the new-born child of God, by the Holy Spirit, that there are remaining corruptions, or sins

in his heart. So clearly, indeed, is this revelation made to him that no doubt exists in his mind as to the fact. He not only *sees* them, but he also *feels* them there. They do not rule in his soul; but they struggle for the mastery. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."[a] Anger, pride; the love of the world, of its wealth, honours, fashions, and follies; "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," are all consciously existent in the believer's soul, clamouring for supremacy, but controlled and kept under by divine grace.

At first, the revelation of these to the young Christian is cause of inexpressible grief. Sometimes he is led even to doubt whether he was ever made the subject of saving grace. "How can I be a child of God," he asks, "when so much of sin remains in my soul?" The discovery is truly and always a painful one. To one who has been exulting in the rapturous sense of pardon and the knowledge of salvation thus to be led to view his condition is cause of sorrow and humiliation; but it is thus that the Comforter would lead the soul, not to undervalue the great and wonderful work already wrought, but to seek after a higher life, a fuller conformity to God, and the spotless purity which the blood of Jesus can impart.

No one who has ever experienced the saving grace of God can understandingly place a light estimate upon it; indeed, the most difficult part of the work of his salvation has now been wrought. He

[a] Galatians v. 17.

has abandoned his sins; he has believed on the Lord Jesus Christ with the heart unto righteousness; and, as the blessed result, his sins and iniquities are remembered against him no more. He is "justified freely;" he is born of the Spirit; he is adopted into God's family; and consequently he is "an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ." In this blessed relation "he stands, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God," and his "hope maketh him not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given to him." All the graces of the Spirit are implanted in his soul when he is regenerated; and so long as he is faithful to God, they are ever growing there. No person who has ever enjoyed this relation and state can speak lightly of them. Such expressions as "only justified," "merely regenerated," ought never to be employed.

But the inquiry arises here, "If what has been done already is so great and glorious, can any thing further be attained or enjoyed by the believer?" Yes; for the Comforter, in His word and in the heart, convinces the believer of the desirableness and necessity of a higher life, of a closer walk with God, and a more thorough consecration to Christ.

2. Further; the Holy Spirit shows by the same Word the possibility of experiencing and enjoying this. It would be to confuse and discourage the child of God, if, convinced of the remains of sin in his heart, and at the same time of the command of God requiring him to "be holy," and to "go on unto perfection," he were assured that the attainment of

such a state is an utter impossibility. But, blessed be God! the Comforter who convinces of the *necessity* of this work, points us also to the *possibility* of its enjoyment. Our blessed Saviour, in His intercessory prayer, says, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth."[b] So the Holy Spirit, who inspired the word, brings to the mind its promises and assurances, and reveals the rich provisions of infinite love. Does the child of God groan over his impurities and corruptions? He is pointed to the fountain over which is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."[c] Does he sigh over his want of conformity to God? He is assured that, "beholding, as with open face, in a glass the glory of the Lord, he shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Lord the Spirit."[d] Does he doubt whether this is his great privilege? Again the Spirit speaks in His word, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."[e] He is led thus to see that, such is the amplitude of the provision, such the all-cleansing power of the blood of Christ, such the almightiness of the Eternal Spirit—no matter how sinful he may be—the work can be done; and whenever, at any stage of the believer's experience, his faith lays hold of these great promises and provisions, the work will be accomplished. According to his faith, it will be done unto him.

This work of *entire* sanctification, we see, is the completion of an on-going process of grace in the

[b] John xvii. 17. [c] 1 John i. 7. [d] 2 Corinthians iii. 18. [e] 1 Thessalonians v. 24.

soul; it is the entireness of a work which had hitherto been partial; it is the perfection of a work which up to this point had been imperfect or incomplete. That this work of grace in the soul may be *gradual* cannot be doubted. It is possible for a person, subsequently to his conversion, to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," to be ever maturing and ripening for glory. Probably this is the experience of most of the children of God. Multitudes who are and have been ultimately saved have never distinctly experienced, or professed to enjoy, entire sanctification. To argue that those only have been saved who have had such definite experience, would exclude the vast majority of all the Church of God. No; the work of entire sanctification in the human soul may be, and in the majority of instances up to this period in the history of the Church is, *gradual*.

But here I inquire, Can this work of the Comforter be wrought *instantaneously*? May the believer *now* present his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, and be conscious that God now accepts his sacrifice? May he *now* reckon himself as dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord? May the corruptions and impurities of his soul *now* be all washed away in the blood of the Lamb? May he *now*, by the aid of the Comforter, love the Lord God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? To all these inquiries I am constrained, in view of the clear and unequivocal

testimony of the word of God, to answer, Yes! O, how many dear Christians, not only of the Calvinistic, but also of the Wesleyan, belief, halt, hesitate, and stagger just here! How many grieve the blessed Comforter by their reasonings, doubts, and unbeliefs, and enshroud their minds in mist often so dense that these truths are seen by them but in a dim, shadowy, and spectral form!

The idea that we must wait until death before this work can be done is dishonouring to the blood of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. If sin were a material or physical thing, and if its seat were in the body, then death might have something to do in its destruction; but sin is in the soul, and death cannot touch that. It is "the blood of Jesus which cleanseth us from all sin." It is the Holy Ghost who sanctifies the soul. And if it is the blood of Jesus which does this work, the work may be done *now;* if it is the Holy Ghost who sanctifies, He can do the work now as well as a century hence.

But it is very natural for us to overlook the Comforter, and to undertake a legal process, or to look to secondary causes for its accomplishment. We think sometimes a long period of sickness would accomplish it, or some heavy disaster would wean us from the world and make us submit to Christ fully; or, if we could be placed in some coveted position in life, we might then enjoy and retain this grace. But all this is only "limiting the Holy One of Israel." That the Comforter can, and often does, make use of such means as I have referred to, cannot be doubted. And yet, have we not often wondered at ourselves in

coming out of such periods of affliction and trial, or after having been placed in the positions so eagerly desired by us, to find how little spiritual improvement we have realized? The fact is, we can no more mortify, or fast, or work ourselves into sanctification than we can into justification. It was not Luther's and Wesley's and Whitefield's fastings and prayers and good works which brought them into a justified state; but it was *faith*, simple faith in Christ, which, by a single act, placed them where months, and even years, of earnest and honest effort had utterly failed to bring them. If we believe, then, distinctively and fully for this great blessing, the Comforter will honour our faith by imparting it to us now.

3. This work of the Holy Spirit in the entire sanctification of the believer is *distinct* from the work which He wrought in his regeneration. This is not *separated* from that; it was germinally and potentially present then; but in character, and chronologically, it is distinct, just as the completion of a work is distinct from its commencement, as death is distinct from dying, as learning to read is distinct from learning the alphabet, or as the bringing on the top-stone is distinct from the foundation of the building. The work of regeneration and initial sanctification is the only true foundation of all Christian character. No one can be sanctified *wholly* who has not been sanctified in part in regeneration, and who is not living, at the time he seeks to have this work wrought in him, in a justified state. To seek sanctification without the enjoyment of justification would be as vain as to attempt to roof a house which had no foundation.

If, therefore, one would enjoy the fulness of God's salvation, he must first have "tasted that the Lord is gracious;" and then he cannot be sanctified wholly unless he definitely and distinctly seek for it, and definitely and distinctly believe for it. But thus seeking, and thus believing, he will receive this grace.

4. The Comforter bears His witness to His operations in the soul at every stage, and in every degree. I know there are many who deny the witness of the Spirit to the complete sanctification of the believer on the ground that there is no direct Scripture testimony upon it. It is here distinctly admitted that there is no *direct* revelation upon this point. But the analogical argument, sustained as it is, and has been for a century or more, by the clear experience of many of the most eminent Christians, is both sound and convincing. Now, that the Comforter *could* as well bear witness to this work when wrought in the soul as to the fact of our justification will be readily admitted. The only question is, *Will* He do it?

I have said that the Comforter does witness to His own work, whatever that may be, in the human soul. For instance, He convinces the ungodly "of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment;" that is, He so acts upon the soul of the sinner as to produce a sense of guilt, "of bondage again to fear." In other words, He bears witness in the soul of man, not only to his sinful character and perilous condition, but also to the multitude of his sins, and to the necessary and fearful consequences outflowing from them. When thus awakened and convinced,

the sinner believes in Christ; he is justified freely, and adopted into the family of God; and then the Spirit bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. So, as we have seen, the Spirit convinces the believer of the remaining corruptions in his heart, and of his need of purity, and inclines him to seek after it. Then (as I think) when by faith he grasps the promised blessing, and the work is actually accomplished, the Spirit bears His witness to that work. Hence we see that from the first movements of the Comforter upon the soul, until He finishes His great work, His constant testimony is borne. To the awakened sinner, He is "the Spirit of bondage again to fear." To the justified and adopted believer, He is "the Spirit of adoption." And to the entirely sanctified believer, He is "the Spirit of holiness."

It may be asked here, "If the Comforter has wholly purified and hallowed the soul, is there any further work for Him to do?" Most certainly there is. In fact, the soul now, with all its volitions, affections, and intellectual powers, is so completely under His control that He can lead it onward and upward, nearer and still nearer to God from day to day. Disburdened of its load of corruption, it is ever rising to loftier heights of holiness and love.

The believer now walks in the light as God is in the light. His fellowship from morn till eve is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and the communion of the Holy Ghost is with him always, as his strength, his song, and his salvation. His peace is deep, constant, settled. It is a "river,"

clear as crystal, ever flowing, never failing, but still proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; and in the "abundance of peace" he delights himself. He has come into the possession of that "great peace" which they have who love God's law, and whom nothing shall offend.

In a word, perfect love yields perfect peace. Such a peace—which all Christians covet, and which many seek otherwhere—is found only as the fruit of love made perfect. But where there is perfect love, there will be perfect peace. When pure love to God and man sits enthroned within the believer's soul, and sways its gentle sceptre over all his passions and his powers, inspiring every thought and directing every word—then the peace of God, like a guardian angel, keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickening fire,
  Come, and in me delight to rest;
Drawn by the lure of strong desire,
  O come, and consecrate my breast!
The temple of my soul prepare,
And fix Thy sacred presence there!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: SAVING, NOT BY COERCION, BUT BY CONSENT.

"*Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.*"—Psalm cx. 3.

NO truth is more clearly made known to us in the word of God than that which teaches that man is the subject of Divine influence.

First, all men partake of it. "He will convince *the world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."[f] Even where the light of the Gospel does not shine, and the institutions of the Gospel are not enjoyed, there the Spirit acts directly upon man's heart and conscience, writes the law of God upon his mind, gives him the sense of sin, and of the need of forgiveness. Wherever man is, there the Comforter is at work upon his heart and mind.

Secondly. This Divine influence is imparted unconditionally and, in a sense, irresistibly. It is the free gift of God, secured by the mediation of Christ. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," or any other condition whatsoever, on the part of man. As soon as a child opens his eyes to the light of this world, he is encompassed by the gracious provisions of the atonement of Christ. He exists as a redeemed creature, he lives in a redeemed

[f] John xvi. 8.

world, in a world where the Holy Spirit is ever labouring to bring man back to his God; and, whether he desires it or not, whether he is willing or unwilling, still the Comforter comes to him with His heavenly illumination, and divine influence, convincing him of sin, and of his consequent need of the mercy of God. May I not truly say that man really has no choice in this matter as to whether he will or will not have this divine influence upon his soul? *He is, he must be,* enlightened and convinced whether he will hear or forbear, whether he will be saved or damned. He cannot prevent the influence of the Spirit coming down upon his heart.

But now, these points being settled, the question arises, "How far will the Holy Spirit exert His sovereign power for the purpose of saving man?" That he is unconditionally and irresistibly convinced of sin we have already seen; but will he be unconditionally and irresistibly saved? A full answer to this would involve a discussion concerning the freedom of the human will, which would carry me very far beyond the purpose of this work. There are some questions, however, which lie directly in my path, and I proceed to consider them.

1. The precise point where divine agency ends and human agency begins can never be seen by the human eye, or expressed in human language. The acutest intellects have expended their utmost strength upon these questions during the by-gone centuries, and the results of their efforts have been unsatisfactory to themselves and to others. There are difficulties involved in all such investigations

which can never be fully overcome. While the general statements of the Word of God are clear and explicit, yet there are facts in human experience which baffle our chosen theories, and humble our pride into the very dust.

It is by no means infrequent that persons trained in Arminianism tell us of a period when they were so wrought upon by the Spirit of God that they could not resist His power, and that it was impossible for them to shake off the influence which had seized hold upon them; and have expressed their conscious inability to get rid of their burden. Persons, in many instances, and in various conditions and circumstances of life, have thus been seized upon; and that not only when they have least thought upon the question of their salvation, but often when they have seemed to be the farthest away from God. Their subsequent life of devotion to Christ has given clearest demonstration of the reality of the work wrought in them. On the other hand, the experience of a majority of Christians teaches that, when convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit, they had the consciousness of a power by which they might have resisted this influence, yet which they did not will to exercise, but rather they were inclined to yield to this divine influence and be saved.

Now, I ask, *Could* the first class of persons referred to have resisted the Spirit? Could they have *so* resisted Him that they would not have been saved? Is their language in the relation of their experience to be taken according to its literal meaning, or as merely expressive of their deep conviction

of sin, combined with a willingness on their part to yield to Christ? Who can so answer these questions as to relieve the mind of all doubt concerning them? There is yet another question. If some men have these deep and overpowering convictions, why do not *all* men have them? That there is a difference of operations we know, but why is one almost irresistibly drawn to Christ, and another able to resist so far that he ultimately perishes in his sin and guilt? Volumes have been written in reply to these questions, and the mind is very far from being clear in its conclusions upon them. Where we cannot penetrate, it is better for us to bow down and adore.

2. While very many questions which might be asked are thus veiled in obscurity, God's word clearly and distinctly informs us that multitudes of persons have resisted, quenched, or grieved the Spirit, so that they have ultimately perished; and thus we learn that the sovereign, eternal, almighty Spirit may be so resisted or quenched or grieved that the design of His operations will be unaccomplished, and man, the subject of these influences, be at last abandoned by Him to endless death.

Very early in the history of the world, God announced this truth to man: "My Spirit shall not always *strive* with man."[g] Nevertheless one hundred and twenty years of respite and culture were enjoyed by the antediluvians before the final destruction came. During all that period Noah preached, and the Spirit strove with man; but never were efforts for the good of the race more persistently or more

[g] Genesis vi. 3.

universally resisted, until finally "the flood came, and took them all away." How many of those who were swallowed up in the seething waters were saved, I have no means of knowing.

The prophet Isaiah declared of the Jewish people, "But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them."[h] Again, Zechariah says of the same people, "Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of Hosts hath sent in His Spirit by the former prophets."[i] The martyr Stephen also, in his address before the Sanhedrim, charges them with the same sin, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."[j] The same truth is also implied in the following exhortations: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."[k] "Quench not the Spirit."[l] There can be no doubt that when the Spirit sheds His light upon the mind, and exerts His power upon the soul, it is for the purpose of man's salvation. Without such divine operation, he could not be saved; with it, he may be saved; but if man resists this influence, and just as long as he does so, he will remain unsaved. If during the whole period of his probation he continues to resist, he will, he *must*, perish; but if he perish at last, he will be left without excuse, because all the

[h] Isaiah lxiii. 10. [i] Zechariah vii. 12.
[j] Acts vii. 51.
[k] Ephesians iv. 30. [l] 1 Thessalonians v. 19.

aid essential for his salvation was imparted to him by the Holy Spirit.

3. There is no portion of the word of God which, if properly understood, teaches that man *will be so irresistibly wrought upon by the Holy Spirit that he will necessarily be saved.* Those portions usually relied upon in proof of such a doctrine really teach no such thing. The language of the Saviour is often quoted for this purpose: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me."[m] There can be no doubt of this. But the question is, Who hath the Father given to the Son? Is it not those whom the Father foreknew as believing on His Name? And all who believe on Him do and will come to Him. Again, Christ says, "No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw Him."[n] But this does not imply that he will be irresistibly *dragged* unto Him. Yet another passage is quoted to sustain the view now opposed: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."[o] From this it is argued that God so irresistibly works upon man's will that he is necessitated to perform His good pleasure. But certainly the apostle teaches no such thing. He is urging the Philippian Christians to work out their salvation; and, for the purpose of encouraging them, he assures them that, of His good pleasure, God is working in them both to will and to do. The natural and legitimate idea is, God gives us the power to will in the direction of our salvation; but it is for us to

[m] John vi. 37. [n] John vi. 44. [o] Philippians ii. 12, 13.

exercise that power: He gives us the power to do; but we are to employ that power: just as He gives us the power to see, to hear, and to walk, while all these faculties are to be exercised by us.

We reach, then, the conclusion, that while the Spirit of God strives with every man, yet there is in man the fearful power of resistance, and he may so employ it as to render of no saving effect all the efforts which the good Spirit makes for his conversion.

Stay, Thou insulted Spirit, stay!
Though I have done Thee such despite;
Nor cast the sinner quite away,
Nor take Thine everlasting flight.

Though I have steel'd my stubborn heart,
And still shook off my guilty fears;
And vex'd and urged Thee to depart,
For many long rebellious years:

Though I have most unfaithful been,
Of all who e'er Thy grace received;
Ten thousand times Thy goodness seen,
Ten thousand times Thy goodness grieved.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

"Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers: and as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away; so they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia."—Acts xiii. 1—4.

IT is said that the Prussian ambassador at the Court of St. James, during the reign of Frederick the Great, wrote to his royal master complaining that, while other ministers rode to court in their carriages, and with liveried servants, he was obliged, because of the smallness of his salary, to ride in a hackney-coach. To this the king, who was parsimonious in everything except his army, replied, "Never mind; when cousin George sees you coming, he always thinks he sees me just behind you with a hundred thousand of my Prussians."

The idea present to the mind of the king was, that however poor, and even shabby, the external circumstances of his ambassador might be, he was

backed up by a power which no earthly government would care to provoke. Without such a power, vain were splendid coaches and liveried servants. With such a power, all these things sank into comparative insignificance.

This suggests to us the true point of view from which we are to regard Christian ministers. Without the presence and power of the Almighty Comforter, vain are all merely external aids and appliances. With this power, they may not only bid defiance to earth and hell, but may succeed grandly in their great work. While the feet of the Lord Jesus were still pressing the brow of Olivet, ere He had begun His great ascent, He said to His wondering disciples, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."[p] It was in view of this that He declared unto them, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you."[q] "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."[r] Without this power, He knew that they were nothing, and that they could do nothing; with it, they were to shake the world, and turn it upside down. This power was not natural to them, nor inherent in them; it was supernatural, superhuman, superangelic; it was *divine*. It is evident, therefore, that preachers of the Gospel are utterly powerless for the accomplishment of their great

[p] Matthew xxviii. 18, 19. [q] Acts i. 5, 8. [r] Luke xxiv. 49.

work unless called to it, and qualified for it, and mightily aided in it, by the Holy Spirit.

1. The call. No man has the right to take upon himself this office and work unless he be called thereto by the Holy Ghost. No one can make choice of the Christian ministry as he would of a trade, or of the profession of medicine, of law, of science, or of arms. The ministry is not really a *profession;* it is a *calling*. Many, doubtless, regard it and enter upon it as a profession; but this is a perversion of the design of the great Head of the Church. Men who thus enter the ministry will never do much in the accomplishment of its great purpose. They may go through its round of duties, but they will never really build up the Church, or win their fellow men to Christ.

God has never handed over the work of choosing His ministers to any man or any company or class of men in the world. He calls His own ministers, He appoints His own ambassadors; and these are, frequently, the persons whom the wise and prudent of this world would pass by. It was not the rulers in Israel—the rich, the learned, the mighty—that the Son of God called to be His apostles, but chiefly the humble fishermen of Galilee. And the greatest reformers, the brightest luminaries of the Church, have had a lowly origin: Luther, the son of a forgeman; Melancthon, coming forth from an armourer's shop; Calvin, not the son of wealthy, although of respectable, parents; Whitefield, the son of a poor innkeeper; and the Wesleys, the sons of a minister of the Church of England, who had a

large family and a small income. Thus it has always been; so it is now. But the humbleness of their origin, the deficiencies, in some, of mental culture, and the rudeness of speech in others, have been more than compensated for by this divine endowment. Splendid natural gifts, the silver tongue of eloquence, the graces of oratory, vast and varied stores of learning, are all well; they are all to be desired; but neither of them, nor all of them combined, will go to make up a minister *of* Christ, nor *for* Christ. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: ["call you."—*McKnight:*] but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." And why is all this? "That no flesh should glory in His presence."[1]

Nor is it sufficient, even, that a man is a Christian, although this is indispensable for one who is called into this work. But it is not every Christian whom God calls to give himself "continually to the ministry of the Word." Every Christian, it is true, is called upon to testify for Christ, to bear witness in honour of His Name; and, in the New Testament sense, every Christian is a prophet or a preacher; but all are not called to devote themselves exclusively to the work of preaching the Gospel.

[1] 1 Corinthians i. 26—29.

This is a point which now-a-days cannot be too carefully guarded. When the laity of the Church are awakening to a sense of their duties and responsibilities; when the obligation to speak for Christ seems to weigh heavily upon many hearts; when the spirit of testimony is given to multitudes of the servants and handmaids of the Lord, care should be taken lest they, in the heat of their zeal, make light of the distinctive call of the Comforter to the office and work of the ministry—lest they should say, with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing *all* the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them."[t] Although the people of the Lord, in a sense, are holy, yet all are not called to this responsible work. The Church may appoint its officers, its Sunday-School teachers, and other helpers; but she has no right to set apart any man to the work of the ministry, unless he is especially moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

It may be said that many persons are mistaken in their convictions about a call to the ministry. This may be so; but they need not be mistaken. The inward call to this work stands not alone; it is always confirmed by testimony which need leave no room for doubt. If there *is* room for reasonable doubt, a man should hesitate long before he takes upon himself this office, if, indeed, he is warranted to take it upon him at all. I would say, Let him abide in his calling, whatever it may be, and there work and speak and live for Christ. But where there

[t] Numbers xvi. 3.

are good natural gifts, and undoubted piety; where the Holy Spirit puts His seal upon the incipient efforts of the man who feels that he is called to this work, and where the eye of the Church recognizes these things, and her voice calls him to devote himself to preaching the Gospel — he who thus enters upon this life-work may be well assured that he has not run before he was sent. If all these things combine to call him to this work, then woe is unto him if he preach not the Gospel.

2. But when a man is thus called by the Holy Spirit to engage in this work, he will realise that His continued presence and power are essential, not only to give him a fitness for it, but also success in it. It has been well said by Mr. Arthur, "If the preaching of the Gospel is to exercise a great power over mankind, it must be either by enlisting extraordinary men, or by the endowing of ordinary men with extraordinary power."* It is ever to be borne in mind that the great design of the Christian ministry is twofold: first, to bring perishing men to Christ; and, secondly, when they have come to Christ and have been saved by His grace, to build them up in faith, and love, and holiness. Now, unless these designs are realized by the professed minister of Christ, and in so far as they fail of being realized, just so far is his ministry a failure; a failure, perhaps, not for want of sincerity, not for want of culture, not for want of labour, and not even for want of both mental and physical energy; but a failure for the want of power, of spiritual power.

* Tongue of Fire.

The "midnight oil" may be freely expended in the elaboration of his sermons; all the stores of knowledge within his reach may be ransacked to enrich and adorn his productions; he may be earnest in his delivery, cogent in his reasonings, and splendid in his imaginings; and yet his sermons, although "faultily faultless," and "icily regular," may, in their moral effects, be "splendidly null." "We may stand and gaze upon the Aurora Borealis, as it spreads over the heavens pure as the blushes upon an angel's face, and yet we grow cold as we gaze."* So many a heart grows cold toward God and Christ, as the flashes of intellect or genius dazzle the imagination or please the fancy.

And here I would ask, Are not many of our Churches at the present day making a great mistake in their hot haste after men of genius, star-gazers, flashing meteors, who shall, by their oratorical powers, their oddities and eccentricities, attract a gaping crowd, fill empty pews, and get large collections? "Verily" such Churches "have their reward." Is it not true that any Church, under ordinary circumstances, may be crowded, and any ministry made successful, if that ministry is baptized with the Holy Ghost, *and* that Church is in earnest in its great work? Is it not to be feared that such ministers as I have referred to are sought for the purpose of supplementing the declining liberality and the withheld labour of a frozen Church? And is it not true that, under the given conditions, all the seeming growth and prosperity of such Churches is only

* Dr. Todd.

seeming, without any real foundation, and utterly at the mercy of circumstances?

But on the other hand, where ministers are anointed with the Holy Ghost, and the Churches are earnestly co-operating with them, there will be real prosperity, and substantial growth. There the people will say, "God is with you of a truth." This anointing, or endowment, or baptism of the Comforter will not make men great in the ordinary and accepted sense; but it will make them good, it will make them men of power, of usefulness, and of great efficiency in the kingdom of God. It is one thing to preach the Gospel without the Holy Ghost, and another thing to preach it "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven!"

Look at the great difference in the disciples of our Lord after they had received this baptism. While the Master was with them, there was not any thing very remarkable in what they either said or did. When He was arrested, they all forsook him and fled. Peter faltered before a servant-maid; and his countenance was blanched with fear as he muttered oaths and curses in his denial of Him whom he had promised only a few hours before to follow even to prison and to death. But only fifty days have passed, and behold the change! In the midst of the city of Jerusalem, in the face of the Jewish Sanhedrim, in the face, too, of imprisonment and death, they boldly preach "Jesus and the resurrection." And Peter charges the Jews with the murder of the Son of God, while he offers them life and salvation through His blood. And see, while he

speaks, while he quotes one Scripture after another, every eye is fixed, every tongue, for the while, is silent! Then a tremor of horror runs through their veins as the conviction flashes upon their minds that they have crucified the Son of God. Then their bosoms begin to swell and heave with sorrow as the heavens grow black with wrath over their guilty heads, and the terribleness of their sin is revealed to them. At length they can restrain their pent-up feelings no more, and a piercing cry bursts forth from thousands of immortal beings, "Men and brethren, what must we do?"

Now, I would not say that results of equal magnitude will always accompany the gifts of the Comforter. Strictly speaking, the Church has never had but one Pentecost. The same conditions do not always exist; and, indeed, the conditions under which the Gospel is preached are always varying; but results similar in their character will, *must*, follow such a divine baptism. No instance of failure is on record. The number of the saved may be greater or less, but some will be saved. How some ministers can go on from year to year in a dull routine of duty, and yet see no results of their labours, is a marvel to heaven and a triumph for hell. How they can be satisfied, how they can rest by day or by night, how they can *live*, is more than we can comprehend.

Then, again, there are some ministers who are keenly alive to their duties and responsibilities. They have entered the work of the ministry from the purest of motives, and under a deep conscious-

ness of a divine call. They are earnest men; they study long and hard; they preach with their might; they are diligent in their pastoral work, and of course they have success; but they are conscious of a great lack somewhere in their ministry. They are not the men of power that they want to be. Their usefulness is very far below what they feel it ought to be. They often ask themselves, "Why is it so? I study, I preach, I visit, I pray, and the Lord of the vineyard knoweth that I am sincere, that I want to glorify Him only." But they ask, with many groans and tears, "Why am I not more useful? Why do I not bring more souls to Christ?" Their closets are vocal with their sighs, and bedewed with their tears. What shall they do? They cannot study with more earnestness than heretofore; they can employ no more physical energy than they have done, for perhaps even now they are worn and wasted by their exhausting efforts. In their agony, at times, they would that the Master would release them from their work either by calling them home to Himself, or by allowing them to return to their farm or to their merchandise.

To such a one I would say, "My distressed brother, your condition calls forth my hearty sympathies; but allow me kindly to call your attention to the very thing which you lack. Giving you credit, as I most certainly do, for all honesty of purpose, and fidelity in labour; yet one thing thou lackest." Do you ask me, "What is that?" I answer, "The full baptism of the Holy Spirit." I do not say that you have not the Comforter. You have Him with

you. He bears witness with your spirit that you are a child of God, and you walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Nor can I doubt that you have been called by Him to this work; but, for lack of a clear appreciation of your privilege, or of an appropriating faith—or, perhaps, from an unwillingness to pay the price and to accept the responsibilities connected with this gift—you have not received such an endowment of power as it is your privilege to possess.

This is what you want, and this is *all* you want. And this you may have to-day, just now. Even now the Divine Comforter is hovering over you; even now the divine baptism is ready to descend. Are you ready to comply with the conditions? Do you ask, "What must I do?" I answer, "Make a complete surrender of yourself, your will, your reputation, your ambition, your all to Christ. Consecrate all to Him for ever, and then believe that your glorified Lord *will* bestow upon you this gift; that it is His good pleasure to do it, and that He will do it now." "And will He do it?" Yes, blessed be His Name! He will.

But it must be remembered that this gift will not be bestowed upon any one for his personal gratification, or to satisfy his ambition, or to make it appear that he is something great. It is bestowed to make us personally holy, and without blame before Him in love, and to make us useful to others; while all shall see that it is not a power, or a strength of our own by which the results following are realised, but that "the excellency of the power is of God."

O if we would only put ourselves into connection with this power, how mightily God would work in us and by us! And if all the ministers of the Lord Jesus were thus anointed, they would shake all the continents and islands of this globe! A moral resurrection would stir and startle this whole valley of death, and an exceeding great army would be raised up for the service of the Lord our God. And is it not the will of God that *all* His ministers should be thus endowed? Is there any thing lacking in the provision for this gift? Is there any limitation in the promise? Is there any thing in either the provision or the promise that would hinder any of us from receiving the gift now? If not, the hindrances must be all in us. But we may remove them by the aid of Divine grace. Let the barriers, then, be removed, and the living fire will descend, the pent-up waters will flow freely.

In the possession of this power what wonderful results have already been realized! The day of Pentecost and the city of Jerusalem were not the only time and place when and where great and glorious results have been witnessed. In Rome and Corinth, in Philippi and Thessalonica, in Ephesus and Galatia, similar effects were produced, until the triumphs had become so general, so uniform, and so wide-spread, that the apostles joined in one grand burst of praise: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place."[w]

[w] 2 Corinthians ii. 14.

The Roman empire felt the impulse of this moral movement. The idolatries of Egypt and of Greece were swept away. The mount of gods was shaken as by an earthquake, and the strongholds of ancient deities were pulled down. The thunder fell from the palsied hands of Jupiter. The helmet slipped from the hoary brow of Mars. The trident dropped from the briny fingers of Neptune. The charms of Venus faded away for ever.

Peor and Baälim Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth, Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with taper's holy shine.
Nor is Osiris seen In Memphian grove or green.
The oracles are dumb; No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archéd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine Can now no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathéd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest in his prophetic cell.*

But these were only the external manifestations of a divine power which was moving upon the hearts of millions. The apostles of our Lord did not go with axe and sledge-hammer to the temples of idols, and hew or break them down from their thrones or their pedestals; but, aided and strengthened with all might by the Holy Spirit, they did go directly to human hearts and consciences; and when idolaters were converted and saved, they first deserted and afterward destroyed the idols which they had formerly worshipped. And where are now the thirty thousand divinities of Egypt, Greece, and Rome? Where, indeed, have they been for the last fifteen centuries?

* John Milton; Hymn on Christ's Nativity.

They have "perished from the earth, and from under these heavens." And they have so perished that they could never be restored, nor their worship and service revived. All the power of Julian the Apostate was not sufficient to restore the speech of the oracle at Delphi, or to uprear the fallen systems of idolatry which the preaching of the Gospel, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," had destroyed.

The reformers in the sixteenth century were endowed in like manner, and, consequently, their triumphs were great. It was not in their own strength that Huss and Jerome were enabled to "witness a good confession," and that the last-named went to the stake singing, "Hail, festal day!" It was not by his own might that Luther stood like a "tower impregnable to earth and hell." It was the power of the blessed Comforter which nerved the sweet, gentle Melancthon to stand up amid the fiery storm of persecution, scattering the rays of heavenly truth around him while he lived, and in his dying moments to reply, when asked if he wanted anything more, "Nothing, unless it be heaven." This upheld Calvin in the midst of his persecutions, and of all the herculean labours which he accomplished for the cause of Christ. This made John Knox more terrible to Queen Mary than an army with banners. And was it not this which winged with power the fiery logic of John Wesley, and inspired the sweet poetic strains of his brother Charles? And was it not this which melted the heart of Whitefield with sorrow and love, and enabled him to bring thousands down into the dust

at the feet of Jesus? The co-labourers of these saintly men, and multitudes of their successors, have been animated, inspired, and clothed with power by the same Almighty Spirit.

Now the Word of God warrants us to believe that the Comforter is now ready to produce equal, and even grander, results than have ever yet been accomplished, if we will only use the ordained means to secure His sovereign agency. There can be no lack of power in the Comforter, neither is there any lack of willingness on His part to reproduce these triumphs upon an enlarged scale. This is, emphatically, His dispensation, and we are living in what would seem to be the culminating period of this dispensation. And can we suppose that there is to be any lack of energy or of efficiency in His operations? On the other hand, are we not warranted to believe that there will be more wonderful manifestations of His power? Is not the page of revelation luminous with the glowing prophecies and promises of the glory of these latter days? Is not the Holy Ghost ready to come down upon His ministers and His Church in richer, fuller, deeper baptisms than have ever yet been received?

We are not straitened in Him, but we are straitened in ourselves! Our views are narrow, and our hopes are low. We do not pray for great things; we do not believe for great things; we do not expect great things. And according to our faith, so it is done unto us. We are weak as other men, when we ought to be pulling down the very pillars of Satan's kingdom. O that all Christian ministers

were clothed with the same spirit that the prophets and the apostles were clothed with, and that many of our fathers possessed,—the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind!

If, then, ye ministers of the Lord Jesus, it is your *privilege* to be filled with the Spirit, is it not also your *duty?* If you come short of what you know is at once your privilege and your duty, will you not be accountable for your short-coming? The question is put to every minister, "Are you willing to pay the cost of such a baptism? Are you willing to accept the responsibility of receiving such a baptism?" There is not, I believe, a minister in the land but who would be willing to have this power; yea, farther, who is not desirous to have it. But are you willing, ye consecrated sons of Levi, to have this gift in God's appointed way? True, our heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask; but how are we to ask? In faith, certainly. But we know well that the exercise of faith depends upon the state of the mind and heart. For instance, Jesus said, "How can ye believe which receive honour one from another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?"[v] How, indeed, can we believe if we cherish any darling idol which we refuse to surrender; whether it be self, pride, reputation, ease, honour, family, position, or whatever it may be? There must be a complete surrender of our all, an entire submission to God, and a willingness to be anything that He would have us be.

[v] John v. 44.

I would not say that we are to be willing *to be nothing*. Alas! too many are willing, in a sense, to be nothing—nothing, that is, either great or good in the kingdom of God. But we would stand high in the estimation of our fellow-men. We want to occupy respectable positions. We want to preach great sermons. And there are some, it may be, who would willingly have this power if it would advance their interests in these directions. But all this must be given up, and the soul must come down into the dust of the deepest self-abasement before God, if we would have this baptism of power. Yes, we must "ask in faith, nothing doubting:" a faith which shall recognize our deep, pressing need of this baptism; a need so seen, so felt, that we shall cry mightily unto God for it, and never rest until the gift is ours. This faith must also recognize that it is the will of the Father, and of the Son, that we should have the gift, and have it *now*.

We know that the Father is ready, that the Son is ready, that the Spirit is ready, and that the promise is ready. My brethren in the ministry, *Are we ready?* Suppose that the rushing fires of another Pentecost should now come upon us, are we prepared to accept the responsibility which that Pentecostal baptism would bring with it? God does not squander His gifts. Now, this baptism of the Spirit enables a man *to be* what otherwise he could not be, *to do* what he could not do without it, and to think and speak as nothing else could enable him to do. There comes, then, with this supernatural endowment a vastly increased responsibility

to think and speak and do as God would have us. There is, indeed, a consciousness within the soul of this power, and along with that comes the divine requirement to act up to the full measure of our acquired ability.

It was so with Isaiah when the live coal brought by the seraphim had touched his lips, and it was said unto him, Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Instantly he hears the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? and who will go for Us?" And at once he replied, "*Here am I; send me.*" And never was prophet or minister sent upon a more fearful mission. "And God said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."[w] Without a moment's hesitation he went. And then, after having done that which he was sent to do, he was sawn asunder, and his spirit joined "the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." When the vision of the glory of the Lord burst upon him in the temple, Isaiah did not comprehend what was the design of God with reference to him. He did not know what he was to do, and what he was to suffer; but he readily accepted the divine commission with all its fearful responsibilities.

We might be willing to accept this endowment

[w] Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

of the Comforter if we knew that it would lead us to a career of prosperity and usefulness, and thus increase both our efficiency and our reputation; but to go forth and labour without great results, to be little and unknown, to be persecuted and despised, to suffer, mayhap *to die,* for the Lord Jesus—it is from such a life and death that we shrink.

Perhaps even now, you are coming to the very threshold of this baptism, but are ready to draw back. Your mind is suggesting countless difficulties, and Satan is near to magnify those difficulties to the uttermost. You are standing, halting, trembling. But I would say, Let the question now be settled. It has been *the* question of your religious, your ministerial, life; and let this be your resolution: "At whatever cost of sacrifice and suffering, whatever responsibility this baptism may bring with it, I will, *I must have it.*" There is only one step more. Believe, and the promised gift is yours; the power is yours. The Comforter comes, and not only is every avenue of the soul made luminous with His glory, but every power is girded with His strength.

Do you ask, "What am I to do with this gift?" I answer, Use it, use it freely, use it constantly. The source whence it comes will never fail you, for it is inexhaustible. It has been well said that "the natural effect of such a blessing would be moral strength, certainty, courage." It makes man "bold as a lion," and enables him to say, "I have set my face like a flint." And if this power is in the soul, it will be seen and felt in its wonderful effects.

Not only will its possessor be conscious of its presence, but those to whom he ministers will see and feel that "God is in" him "of a truth." And here is what the Church wants, and what the perishing world around us needs. Shall we have it?

Father, glorify Thy Son;
Answering His all-powerful prayer,
Send that Intercessor down,
Send that other Comforter,
Whom believingly we claim,
Whom we ask in Jesu's Name.

Wilt Thou not the promise seal,
Good and faithful as Thou art?
Send the Comforter to dwell
Every moment in our heart?
Yes: Thou must the grace bestow;
Truth hath said it shall be so.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT: HIS RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

"*And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*"—Acts iv. 31.

OF the one hundred and twenty who received the Pentecostal baptism, only twelve, including Matthias, were apostles; the rest were brethren and sisters. But the "cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon *each* of them and they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost."[x] So with those who were assembled at the house of Cornelius; while Peter yet spake, "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word."[y] Thus it was everywhere. Believers of every condition in life, and of every grade of intelligence, received the wonderful gift. The promise of the Comforter is not limited to any age, or country, or clime. It is "unto as many as the Lord our God shall call."[z] It is to us and our children as much as to those who were present in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, or who were then dwelling at Jerusalem. If, therefore, any one is destitute of this gift, it is either because of the want of a clear ap-

[x] Acts ii. 3, 4. [y] Acts x. 44. [z] Acts ii. 39.

preciation of his privilege, or of an earnest, believing effort to enjoy it. No language could possibly be clearer than that in which this promise comes to us; and we are living at a period when the Church may confidently expect more abundant outpourings of the Spirit than at any former period of its history. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved."[a]

In the early Church all possessed this grace in a greater or less degree; but the gifts of the Spirit were not alike in all. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."[b] Even then, all did not have "the gift of healing," all did not "speak with tongues," all did not "work miracles," all did not "interpret;" but all "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." It was this which constituted them living members of the body of Christ, living branches of the true vine; it was this which made them labourers together with God, and which gave their labours such wonderful success. In short, it was this which enabled the Church to "turn the world upside down."

But when error blinded its sight, and a mass of forms and ceremonies stifled its breath, and a rush

[a] Acts ii. 17, 18, 21. [b] 1 Corinthians xii. 4.

of worldliness paralyzed its energies, then it was bereft of its supernatural strength, and, like the shorn Samson, both feeble and blind, it became the sport and the prey of its enemies. Like the wire disconnected from the battery; or the wheel with the stream shut off from its buckets; or the train loosed from the engine; or the body separated from the soul; so the Church, cut off from the Source of its power, became unequal to its work, and even lost sight of its mission. Here and there individual souls kept up their connection with the Holy Spirit, and shewed forth the power derived therefrom; but unto the Church, as a whole, it might have been said by her risen Lord, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

The Reformation witnessed the re-awakening of men's minds to the great truths of God's word. Then there was a trumpet-blast which rang out clear and strong among the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Appenines, and reverberated from the chalky cliffs of Britain's isle, calling upon the nations to arise and shake off the blinding dust of the ages from their brows, and to snap the fetters which had so long bound them in civil and ecclesiastical bondage. The nations, responsive to the call, "leaped to lose their chains." The light of the truth, which had been concealed by the thick clouds of ignorance and superstition, again burst forth, and the nations shouted for joy as they beheld its radiance. Just as the inhabitants of northernmost regions, when a night of many months is about to pass away, assemble upon some mountain-summit, ready to hail with joy

the first appearance of the sun's disk emerging from the wintry night above the horizon, as the first faint rays betokening his approach are seen, send up a loud shout which is caught up over all the realms where darkness had so long held unbroken sway; so the nations, when they saw the first rays of eternal truth, hailed them with rapturous joy as the harbingers of an approaching day of brightness and glory.

But great and glorious as was the work accomplished by Luther and his co-labourers, it was not, altogether, a revival of spiritual religion. It brought out clearly some of the vital truths of God's word, and especially that of justification by faith. It furnished to the common people those great foundation truths which were afterward to be employed in the revival of a spiritual Christianity; but it was hindered by fearful conflicts with the civil powers, by wranglings about ceremonies, by an alliance with the State, and by retaining many things which still had "the smell of Rome upon them." It was not until after two centuries of fire, and blood, and death, that men began to see clearly the need of a revival of spiritual religion.

The "Holy Club" at Oxford, while prayerfully studying that Bible which was henceforth to be their "one book," saw their privilege in Christ Jesus. At first they saw the promises dimly; but after fasting and praying and reading for weary days and months, the clear light shone upon their souls, and another Pentecost came upon Europe and America. The people were now taught, as they had not been

since the apostolic days, that all who believed in Christ should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, bearing witness to their forgiveness and sonship, regenerating their souls, and sanctifying them wholly. Soon the pulsations of a new life began to beat and throb among the people, and a revival of spiritual religion was begun, which is still going on, and which will continue until millennial glory bursts upon the world.

And yet, after all, while the results of that revival have been most glorious, the Church, as a whole, does not understand or appreciate its privilege. What now I would say to every Christian is, You may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enjoy full salvation. This is your blood-bought privilege, your heavenly birthright, the ascension gift of your Head and Lord. More willing—how *much more* an arch-angel could not tell—than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children, is He to give this blessed Comforter to you, and to give Him to you now. Are you ready now to open your hearts and receive the heavenly Messenger? He will only come to dwell in your hearts when you deeply feel the need of Him, and earnestly ask Him to come. He will only *abide* with you so long as you are led by Him. If you resist or grieve Him, He will take His departure.

Consider, I pray you, these five points :—

1. *It is clear that the present condition of the Christian Church imperatively calls for this gift of the Comforter.*

While great things have been accomplished

during the past century under the new Pentecost which has come upon the Church, all earnest Christians are deeply impressed with the need of aiming at a higher position, and occupying a higher platform of religious experience and of spiritual power. This is the greatest present need of the Church. The multiplication of material agencies cannot take the place or serve in the stead of this gift. A large increase of wealth, of numbers, of church edifices, of institutions of learning, is a great cause of rejoicing, if this is looked to only as a *means*, and not as an *end*. But if we look upon these things with a self-satisfied complacency, and look no farther and no higher, then decline, decay, and death will fasten upon the very vitals of the Church.

A mighty politico-ecclesiastical institution, like the Roman Catholic Church, may be consolidated and perpetuated by superstition, by appeals to the prejudices and passions of men, and by keeping their minds in bondage. But the destruction of such an institution is only a question of time. It is only "the word of the Lord which endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."[a]

A long career of prosperity in the Protestant Churches of Christendom has given to them wealth, numbers, social position, civil power, and world-wide respectability. And, in many instances, these things have acted fearfully against them. Wealth has given rise to pride, luxury, fashion, worldly-minded-

[a] 1 Peter i. 25.

ness, covetousness, love of forms and ceremonies; and these have, in some instances, smothered, and in others eaten out, the very life of the Church.

Many so-called Christian Churches are the very centres of fashion; in fact, they take delight in being known as "fashionable congregations." The assemblies which gather in them on the Sabbath present rather the appearance of a "dress parade" than of companies of Christian worshippers. Mammon, fashion, lust, are worshipped by the thoughtless, giddy, flirting throng. The idea of a spiritual religion is scouted by the pulpit and the pew as the very essence of fanaticism and folly.

I admit that the cases referred to above are exceptional, but that they exist none can doubt; and they are wicked caricatures of the religion of the Lord Jesus. But, I ask, is it not true that in very many of our Churches these worldly influences are exerting their power? Has not this mania for dress, and fashion, and show, seized upon many people who profess godliness? Are not vast sums annually expended for the gratification of this passion? Are not the mouths of some ministers closed upon this subject for fear of giving offence to their rich and fashionable members? Now what is to check, ay, and roll back, this in-rushing tide of worldliness? This enemy to spiritual religion is "coming in like a flood." What, or who, but "the Spirit of the Lord can lift up a standard against him?"

But not only so. While the very life of many of our Churches is being assailed in this way, Romanism

on the one hand, and infidelity in its thousand forms on the other, stand ready to assault, and hope to carry our works, and to sweep away the Church of Christ from the earth. Yea, more. While we are dallying with our Delilahs, and parleying traitorously with our enemies, immortal souls, treading with rapid strides the broad and beaten highway to hell, are leaping from its fearful precipices into the darkness of an eternal night. Surely, then, we cannot doubt the necessity of a marked and wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

2. *Not only is this needed that we may maintain our present standard of benevolent and evangelistic efforts, but also that we may go forward to meet the demands which are so urgently pressing upon us.*

Under the revival influences of the last century the liberality of the Church has increased more than a thousandfold. In fact, during the last sixty years most of the benevolent enterprises of the Church have been begun and carried forward to their present gigantic proportions; but the providence of God is opening up new fields of enlarged dimensions, and is calling upon the Church to lift up its eyes and see them white already to the harvest, and waving to the sickle of the reaper.

Now, a religion which utterly ignores all creature merit, no matter of what sort it may be, can never call forth for any length of time large benefactions, unless it is actuated by the spirit of Christ and inspired by His bright and lustrous example. If man can be made to think that his charities and his works will entitle him to eternal life, and will give him in-

dulgence to live as he lists in the present life, then he will give his money without stint or measure. This is the grand lever by which the Romish Church raises such vast sums of money for the purpose of carrying on her operations. This has given her the control, at various periods, of the moneys and the estates of nations and of kingdoms. But Protestantism presents no such plea; it desires to present no such plea. Its claims are based upon Christ's commands, His promises, and His example; and it regards and teaches that the love of Christ is the strongest motive and most controlling principle which can call forth the liberality and labours of His people.

But if this love decline, if the throne where Christ should reign unrivalled is usurped by the world, then the heart will shrivel under the new reign; its warmth will be chilled and congealed, its views will become warped and narrowed, and the cause of Christ will be permitted to languish and decay. Thus we see that the presence and power of the Comforter are not only needed for our spiritual life, peace, and joy, that we may be enabled to live a holy life, that we may instrumentally bring souls to Christ; but, also, that the spirit of liberality may be maintained and greatly enlarged, until every human habitation has been visited with the light of the Gospel, and every human heart has tasted and proved its power.

3. *The abiding presence of the Comforter is needed in our Churches in order that professing Christians may illustrate, by daily example, the power and blessedness of the religion of the Lord Jesus.*

The Church is "the light of the world," "a city set upon a hill," to be seen by, and to give light to, all that are around. It exists for the illumination and salvation of the world. The preaching of the Gospel, the circulation of the Scriptures, the instruction of the people in religion both publicly and privately, are valuable and ordained means for the upbuilding of the kingdom of Christ; but, for efficiency, nothing can compare with the practical, living demonstration of a holy life to convince the gainsayer, and to show to the world that there is a divine reality in the religion of Christ. The world does not go to the Bible, or to institutes of theology, or to any of the massive volumes which have been written in defence of Christianity, to learn what religion is; but it expects that every one who professes to be a Christian shall furnish a specimen of what it is, and of what it can do for an immortal being.

And it has a right to expect this. The great Teacher Himself has said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"[d] And St. Paul acknowledges the fact and the value of such evidence when he says, "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."[e]

[d] Matthew vii. 16. [e] 2 Corinthians iii. 1—3.

Every Christian, then, should be an epistle of Christ, known and read by men, and declaring to all what the religion of Jesus can do for a fallen and guilty sinner.

The great purpose of constituting the Church of Christ in the world is that its light may *so* shine before men that they may *see* its good works, and thus be led to glorify our Father who is in heaven. But if men who profess to be Christians live like other men—are as vain, proud, ambitious, covetous, over-reaching in business, or dishonest in their dealings—then the natural and legitimate result will be that the world will not only disbelieve in religion, but will come in the end to despise its very name. Of all the arguments which infidelity has adduced in its conflicts against the truth of God, none have been so difficult to deal with, and none have been plied with greater efficiency and more alarming success, than the one arising from the inconsistent conduct of some of its professors.

Nothing, on the other hand, has so much power to shut the brawling mouth of infidelity as the consistent life of the professed follower of the Lord Jesus. A holy life is an irresistible and unanswerable argument for the truth and reality of the religion of Christ. If it were generally exhibited to the eye of the world, it would effectually stay the floods of Rationalism, Pantheism, Socialism, and the thousand kindred antagonisms of our holy Christianity. With this power the Church could resist them all, as the rocky cliff resists the rushing, roaring waves of the sea, and breaks them into

foam at its feet. This is a living, visible testimony, which all the negations of scepticism, inspired by bitter hatred of truth, are incapable of resisting. There are some men who will scoff and sneer at Churches, and creeds, and Christians in general, but the mere mention of a father's prayers, and of a mother's devoted piety, will hush their clamours, and bring tears to their eyes.

But, without the indwelling Comforter, men cannot live this life of devotion to Christ, and shew forth the principles and the power of His holy religion. They may endeavour to imitate it; they may strive to galvanize their dead souls into something resembling this divine life; but all their efforts will prove abortive, and result only in their confusion and disgrace. And while this cannot be successfully imitated, neither can anything take its place. Christ's kingdom is not of this world. It is a divine, a spiritual kingdom; it is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Such a kingdom can only be maintained and extended by spiritual agencies. Physical agencies, "bodily exercise," gorgeous rituals and ceremonials, may help to maintain a sensuous religion; but only the Holy Ghost can make living Christians, and, through them, bring this redeemed world to Christ.

4. *This is all which the Church now needs to complete its grand mission in the world.*

The machinery of the Church is well-nigh perfect. The strategic points which have been seized upon in the great battle-ground of the world are all that could be desired. There is wealth enough and

there are numbers enough to speedily conquer this world for Christ. And, added to all this, there are those grand preparations which Providence has been making during the roll of the centuries in levelling the mountains, exalting the valleys, smoothing the rough places, and straightening its crooked ways, so that now the whole world is open to the Gospel. Even Rome, the Eternal City, so long barred against the entrance of the truth, has now been opened in God's providence. The sceptre of temporal sovereignty has fallen from the feeble hands of the aged Pontiff, and the complete destruction of the system of which he is the head is not far distant. Now, also, the Bible, that wonderful two-edged sword which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Son of God, is translated into more than two hundred of the languages and dialects of the world, and is ready to exert its power upon a thousand millions of its population.

Besides this, the "ends of the world" have evidently come upon us. In this period, the lines of prophecy seem to be converging, and the blush of the dawn of the millennial morning is already upon the face of the sky. What is wanted, then, for the grand consummation of our work in the world? Nothing, I say nothing, but that we ourselves be "all filled with the Holy Ghost." "O Christians, is there such a doctrine in our creed as the doctrine of divine influence? Is there such an agent in the Church as the Almighty Spirit of God? Is He among us expressly to testify of Christ? to be the great animating Spirit of His missionary witness—

the Church? and is it true that His unlimited aid can be obtained by prayer; that we can be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire? O ye that preach, believe the promise of the Spirit, and be saved! Ye that love the Lord, keep not silence, send up a loud, long, united, and unsparing entreaty for His promised aid! This, this is what we want, and this is all we want. Till this be obtained, all the angelic agency of heaven will avail us nothing; and when it is obtained, all that agency will be unequal to the celebration of our triumph."*

And this Divine Helper, who is all that we need, is even now hovering over us. He is willing, ready, waiting now to give to His people such an endowment of power as will completely equip them for this last struggle, and prepare them for a final and glorious victory. There is no lack, then, in our machinery, nor is there any want of power in the Comforter. What is needed is that His almighty power should be connected with this machinery.

It is not enough that the engine be perfect in its construction, that the steel-plates and brass mountings be well polished, that the furnace be well filled with fuel, and the boiler with water. All these conditions might exist for ever, and not a motion of the machinery be made. There is another condition yet necessary, absolutely essential—and that is fire. When that is present, all the other conditions begin to be employed. Steam is rapidly generated, and the attached train is drawn to its destination, even over the breadth of a whole continent.

* Church in Earnest. By the Rev. John Angell James.

The poles for the telegraphic wires may be properly set, and the wires be stretched over mountain and valley, hill and plain, or the cable be laid down in the ocean's depths, and yet no message be borne over them for ever. But let the battery be attached, let the electric current be brought to bear upon these wires, and messages will be flashed with lightning speed over all the land, down through the coral coffins of the sea, until the whole world is brought into almost instantaneous communication. So now let the connection be formed between the Eternal Spirit and the machinery of the Church, and the whole will be set in motion, and messages of mercy and of salvation will be borne over all lands, and over all seas.

Still further let me illustrate this in the terse language of a living preacher:—"Go into a room where there is a galvanic battery. You see it with its cups and plates and coils and wires apparently perfect. You propose to try its power upon your own person, and so you lay hold of those two shining balls, one with either hand, and wait for the shock; but you do not feel it. Then for a moment you imagine you feel its current thrilling your frame, but sober reason says it is not so. You press the balls the harder, as though the vigour of your grasp might give them power, but no answering thrill comes, and you throw them down, and seek for the cause of the failure; when right there in the heart of the machine, where the power should be concentrated, there is no coil, hence no power."*

* Rev. W. H. Boole, before the New York State Methodist Convention.

But now let the essential coil be put in its place, let the current be applied, and then take hold of the balls, and every nerve and muscle and fibre will quiver under the power of the battery. So when these currents of Divine influence are brought to bear upon dead souls, ay, when they shall be brought to bear fully upon the whole valley of death, there will be a stir, a noise, a coming together of bone to bone, and a great moral resurrection will be the result.

"Suppose we saw an army sitting down before a granite fort, and they told us that they intended to batter it down, we might ask them, 'How?' They point to a cannon-ball. Well, but there is no power in that; it is heavy, but not more than half a hundred, or perhaps a hundred weight. If all the men in the army hurled it against the fort, they would make no impression. They say, 'No, but look at the cannon.' Well, there is no power in that. A child may ride upon it, a bird may perch in its mouth: it is a machine, and nothing more. 'But look at the powder.' Well, there is no power in that; a child may spill it, a sparrow may peck it, yet this powerless powder and powerless ball are put into the powerless cannon; one spark of fire enters it, and then in the twinkling of an eye that powder is a flash of lightning, and that ball a thunderbolt which smites as if it had been sent from heaven. So is it with our Church machinery at this day. We have all the instruments necessary for pulling down strongholds; and O, for the baptism of fire!"*

* Tongue of Fire.

And why should not this baptism of fire now fall upon the Church? Why should all these agencies and means and appliances stand comparatively powerless? Why should not this dead world even now be quivering and shaking with the throes of a new birth, and, bursting its sepulchral womb, come forth into the life and brightness and glory of the long-promised millennium? It is for the Church to answer why; and although the answer would, doubtless, reveal its sin and shame, it had better be made speedily. Yes, we will answer now: "We have failed to understand our privilege and our duty; or, when we have known our duty, we have either criminally neglected to obtain this gift of power, or, by erecting barriers in the way, we have hindered the application of the power of the Holy Ghost."

5. *Without this baptism of the Comforter, the Church will prove itself to be a failure in the sight of angels, devils, and men.*

Let me ask, Why was the Church instituted? For what purpose does it exist in the world? What is its mission? Is it not to evangelise and save the world? The last command of Christ, ere "the chariots of God" bore Him upward to His everlasting throne, was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."[f] And yet again, "Go ye, and teach"—make disciples of—"all nations."[g] And this is not merely or solely the duty of the ministry, but also, of the members of the Church. Every added member, whether old or

[f] Mark xvi. 15. [g] Matthew xxviii. 19.

middle-aged or young, rich or poor, bond or free, is to be a "light-bringer and a light-bearer," a preacher of the Gospel, a messenger of mercy to this world. There is, there can be, no exception to this rule. In some way; in some sphere, every one is commanded to labour during the brief day of life's probation in the Lord's vineyard. The Church, then, is designed to be a soul-saving institution, and every Christian is to make it his business to "save a soul from death;" not, of course, efficiently, but instrumentally. The order of the great Head of the Church is universal; differing in its application as widely as do character, position, and relation in life, and yet all are to work on in harmony toward the same grand result. Just as in a large cotton factory, there are wheels of almost every size and in almost every position, some nearer to the source of power and some more remote, some more and some less prominent, some visible to the eye of the visitor, and others invisible; but amid all the whirl, the confusion, and the noise, there is not one wheel, or spindle, or hand, but which aids in the production of the designed fabric. So, in the Church, there are diversities of gifts and operations, but it is the same Spirit working in all and through all for the accomplishment of His glorious purposes. Who can doubt this? And yet, if it is true, how very far have its members come from answering this design?

In too many places, the activities of the Church are confined to the few; the mass of its members are idlers. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." When we ought to be shaking

the world, or turning it upside down, we are, too many of us, settled down into idleness and indifference. We are mere pigmies, when we ought to be giants; we are powerless, when we ought to be mighty through God. How long shall this state of things be continued? What can, what will, wake us from our slumbers, and engage us earnestly in the work to which we are called? Will God permit an outburst of persecution to arouse the Church, or will He "pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground?" Something must be done, and that right early.

And if the Church fails to answer the design of its existence, it becomes only a weak, shrivelled, powerless thing. When the living flames expire from its altars, then there will be substituted in their place, for a season, a merely sensuous religion, a formal and outward show, and sooner or later will come on a sad degeneracy into error, superstition, strife, divisions, decay, and death. "Christianity, then, would sacrifice its divinity if it abandoned its missionary character, and became a mere educational institution. When the power of reclaiming the lost dies out of the Church, it ceases to be the Church. It may remain a useful institution, though it is most likely to become an immoral and mischievous one."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT IS THE LAST AND THE MOST GLORIOUS.

"For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth."—2 Corinthians iii. 10.

DURING the four thousand years preceding the Christian era, two dispensations flourished, decayed, and vanished away. Each was preparatory to, and explanatory of, the other.

The first was the patriarchal, all dim and shadowy, but adapted to the infancy of the human race. While it lasted, God revealed Himself "at sundry times and in divers manners." In two marked instances, He revealed His wrath against the "ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." In the one He destroyed the race by a flood; in the other He swept away the cities of the plain with a storm of fire. There was also revealed to men another and a higher state of existence. Men heard the rustle of angels' wings, and saw their bright forms, not only in vision, but actually descending from the heavens, and then returning thither again. But they learned even more than this of that higher state of being. They probably saw the deathless patriarch go up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and they knew then that the world whence the angels had come was not only

for them, but for men; for the good, the pure, the holy, such as they knew Enoch had been. But above all this, they knew that, although the race was fallen, wicked, and exposed to God's wrath, there was a Redeemer provided, through whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Promises of a Saviour were given to Adam, and repeated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The coming of "Shiloh," to whom the gathering of the people should be, was regarded as a certainty, and looked forward to with delight and rejoicing. Thus in the gray dawn of the world's history, the light of God shone upon the pathway of man, revealing Himself, His relation to His creatures as their Almighty Sovereign, rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, and opening up before man's wondering eyes another and a future world.

The Mosaic dispensation was formally opened upon Mount Sinai in the giving of the law, amid the most terrible and sublime manifestations of the Divine Presence. The tabernacle and its worship were formally instituted; and sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies were ordained by the direct command of God. A new and a brighter era had now dawned upon the world. There was now furnished to man not merely a traditional revelation of God, but what was far better for his understanding and use, a *written* one; and all the great truths which He had theretofore taught man were formally gathered up and recorded in "the book of the law." During the fifteen centuries which followed, a succession of prophets not only foretold the advent of the Messiah,

but also the establishment, extension, and glory of His kingdom. And yet, glorious as was this dispensation in all of its external forms, many intimations were given that it was only temporary, that another and a more glorious one was to dawn, erelong, upon the world, and that amid its glories the mists and the shadows were all to pass away. The prophets referred to this period as "that day," "the last days," "the day of the Lord."

At length the tones of the prophetic harp were hushed, and during four centuries no voice of God was heard in the Jewish Church, and no angelic messengers were seen by man. At the dawn of the morning which followed, and which was ultimately to brighten into the glories of the millennium day, a voice was heard in the wilderness uttering the cry, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."[b] He came. His advent was attended by the most enthusiastic demonstrations on the part of the heavenly hosts, who had in countless numbers sung over Bethlehem's plains, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" until the air trembled with the burden of their song, and heaven's high courts re-echoed with their exultant shouts. Then, after a few brief notices of Him, He is seen no more until he is thirty years old. At that time, in order to fulfil all righteousness, we behold Him standing upon the banks of the Jordan, ready to be inducted into the office of a priest by

[b] Matthew iii. 2, 3, 11.

one regularly descended from the tribe of Levi. Jesus is baptised by John; and then the heavens are opened, and the Spirit of God descends upon Him, while a voice from the opened heavens saith, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here, then, we behold the whole Trinity: the Son, in human flesh; the Spirit, like a dove, descending and remaining on Him; and the Father speaking from heaven, bearing His testimony to His own incarnate Son. Wonderful scene! Grand inauguration of the Son of God into His priestly and prophetical offices!

His great life-work is now fairly begun; and after forty days of fasting in the wilderness, He is brought into immediate conflict with the prince of darkness. Thrice assaulted by him, He is in each assault the victor. The thunder-scarred head of the arch-fiend is bruised by his Conqueror, and he receives the premonitions of his final and complete subjugation. Three years follow during which He taught and preached, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. At length His departure from earth is at hand. Intimations of this fill the hearts of His disciples with sorrow and grief; but He promises to send them "another Comforter, who shall abide with them for ever." Then He is taken by His enemies, and by wicked hands is crucified and slain. But He rises again, and for forty days He appears at intervals to give assurance of His resurrection to His disciples. Then He ascends to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God. He sits down upon His regal

and mediatorial throne, the joy of all heaven and the centre of its bliss. But He does not forget His disciples who are waiting and longing for the fulfilment of His promise. And when the day of Pentecost has fully come, He sends down the Holy Ghost with all His gifts, and grace, and power.

The Christian dispensation is now inaugurated. Armed with the might and power of the Divine Comforter, the infant Church sprang at once into the very midst of the arena of conflict with the philosophies, the mythologies, the idolatries, the superstitions, and the wrongs of the world, and with its mighty spiritual weapons began to pull down the strongholds of the kingdom of darkness. Hated and persecuted, yet its numbers increased, and the word of God mightily grew and prevailed. "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away; how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?"[1]

But great and glorious as were the triumphs of the early Church, we are witnessing scenes which not only equal but almost surpass them. The dawn of the nineteenth century witnessed the most enlarged preparations for the speedy conversion of the world to Christ. Organizations began to be multiplied for the purpose of husbanding the piety, the beneficence, and the labours of the Church. And as its operations were enlarged, and its convictions of duty were

[1] 2 Corinthians iii. 7. 8.

intensified, Divine Providence opened one door after another before its wondering eyes, until now the whole world is open to the messengers of the Gospel. These organizations, as we have seen, were born in the midst of the revival which began in the eighteenth century, and were baptized with the same Spirit who inspired the triumphs of the apostolic age. And under these mighty agencies which have been called into requisition, whole districts of the earth have been evangelized and Christianized.

The inhabitants of the Sandwich and the Friendly Islands have been reclaimed from idolatry, and the last relics of their former wicked practices have all but disappeared. Their Churches have not only become independent and self-supporting, but, in turn, are sending out missionaries for the conversion of the islands of the sea to Christ. Many of the Fiji Islanders have been turned from idolatry, and cannibalism; they have been brought under the influence of the Gospel, and have sat down at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in their right mind. More recently still, the island of Madagascar, where hundreds of the followers of Jesus formerly sealed their testimony with their blood, and had furnished a martyrology which, in many instances, was equal to that of the early years of the Church, is being brought under the power of the Gospel. Its idols have been publicly burned; bloody altars have been overthrown; temples have either been deserted and destroyed, or else converted into houses for Christian worship; and the Queen has become a nursing mother to the Church. In northernmost regions, as well as on the

banks of the Ganges and the Irrawaddy; in Africa and in China, in Turkey and in Hindostan, and, indeed, in most of the languages and dialects of the world, there are tongues which speak the Saviour's praise.

But not only so; while this mighty baptism has been upon the Church, and its forward movements have been crowned with such signal success, directly or indirectly traceable to the same influence is the great work which has been wrought in the cause of human liberty. Great Britain has emancipated the slaves formerly held by her West India planters. Russia has lifted up forty-five millions of serfs from their degraded and enslaved condition. America, in the midst of a baptism of blood and tears, struck the manacles from the limbs of four millions of slaves, and has since asserted their manhood, and granted to them the elective franchise. God is now moving wonderfully among the nations. Thrones of tyranny and oppression are crumbling into the dust: hoary systems of error and superstition are passing away; a mighty upheaval is now going on; all men are looking on, and wondering what will come next.

> The light! the light! it breaks;
> Light on the chain of the slave,
> The light of God on the labourer's home,
> Light on the martyr's grave!

Much as has been said of the activities and energies of this age, the half has never yet been told. There is no man living who is fully capable of grasping the mighty influences which are at work,

and the mighty changes which are going on in human society. The rapid disappearance of great wrongs which had for ages rooted themselves in the constitutions and governments of the world; the fading away of idolatrous systems; the recent overthrow of the temporal power of the Beast, which will be followed ere long by the destruction of the power of the False Prophet; the multiplication of facilities for the evangelization of the world; the rapid increase of agencies for this work; the binding of continents together by rails of iron and steel; the union of oceans by canals, and the girdling of the earth with telegraphic wires, are all events which in their magnitude and significance are above the comprehension of man. And yet, grand and glorious as these events certainly are, they do not answer the prophetical descriptions of the full glory of this dispensation of the Comforter. What we now see is only the dawn of the morning; what the prophets saw in vision was the full glory of the meridian of a day which will fill all earth and heaven with hosannas and halleluias.

This is God's last dispensation of mercy toward our race, and it is rapidly drawing toward a close. The Father has worked; the Son has worked; and now, for ages, the Holy Ghost has been working. We have not discerned His agency or felt His power as we might have done. But His work, in connection with the redemption of the world, is now being better understood, more fully appreciated, and more heartily trusted in, than at any former period. It only needs that the Church, the whole

Church, should cry more mightily to God for the fuller manifestation of the Comforter, and it will be realized in a manner hitherto unknown. "Whatever increase Christ's kingdom has received from the beginning down to these times, it has received through the power of the Comforter; and if it is receiving any at this day, if we find reason to bless God for the manner in which the heathen in any part of the earth are now coming into His kingdom, our especial thanksgiving and praise are due to the Comforter, who is still working His threefold conviction, and is thereby casting down the abominations of idolatry."*

And are we not warranted to expect results upon a grander scale than any which have yet been realized? Is it not apparent, from what He has already wrought, that the Holy Spirit "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us?" As yet we have only seen and known a part of His ways; but the fulness, the thunder of His power, who can understand? He has but in a partial manner, and in a few places, displayed His power, and we have lifted up our hands in astonishment, and exclaimed, "Wonderful! Wonderful!" But if our faith properly appreciated the work of the Comforter, we should expect to see far greater things than these. The time hastens when He will lift the veil from the mind of the Jewish people, and they shall look upon Him "whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one

* The Mission of the Comforter.

mourneth for His only son!" The Beast and the False Prophet shall be overthrown. Idolatry which, in one form or another, has cursed and crushed so many millions of the world's population for thousands of years, shall be destroyed with all its fearful train of superstitions and abominations, of lusts and crimes. Intemperance, the vile monster, which has by its arts degraded and ruined millions during the past centuries, shall come to an end, and its power shall be completely destroyed. All forms of vice and wrong shall be banished from the world, and righteousness and peace and joy shall everywhere prevail. "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."[j] "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."[k] Then the luminous and sublime predictions of David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel will be fully realized, and the glowing utterances of the Apocalypse will have their glorious completion.

I am not, by any means, unaware of the great and formidable difficulties which lie in the way of the accomplishment of these results. But what are difficulties in the presence of the Almighty, the Eternal Spirit? If the promise and the oath of God are pledged for their accomplishment, what else does our faith need to rest upon? Our glorified Saviour has provided for the full redemption of

[j] Habakkuk ii. 14. [k] Jeremiah xxxi. 34.

our race; and in harmony with this provision made by the Lord Jesus, the Comforter has come forth to complete and consummate this work. And this He has been and still is doing gloriously. Invisible to the human eye, He is acting directly upon human souls, bowing them down by His power, illuminating them with His light, lifting them up from their degradation, transforming them by His grace, restraining even where He does not renew, and checking where he does not convert; ceaselessly active by day and by night, in all countries and in all climes, never losing sight for one moment of His great purpose, and never relaxing His omnipotent energies. And now, even now, He is ready to come down upon the whole Church and the whole world, and to bring the millions of the human race to the feet of Jesus.

One thought more; while the Holy Spirit is doing this work, He does not testify of Himself. Thus the Saviour declared, "He shall not speak of Himself; but He shall testify of Me; He shall glorify me."[1] He is drawing the attention of the world to Christ; and there never was a time when all classes of men were so busily engaged in looking at Him. Men cannot keep their eyes off the Lord Jesus. He is hated and despised by multitudes; His divinity and authority are denied; and yet they keep looking at Him and His cross. Strauss and Renan, Parker and Emerson, and a host of others, have called the attention of millions to His claims, who otherwise might not have thought of them. For a while, their

[1] John xv. 26; xvi. 13, 14.

utterances are listened to by the world; but when they have died away, the name of Jesus is ploughed deeper into the hearts of men than ever before.

Just as, during the prevalence of the storm, the sun is obscured by heavy masses of clouds; but when the storm is over, we forget the blackened sky, and the clouds, and the tempest, and see only the sun enthroned in the heavens and flooding the world with his glory: so men rage against Christ, and sometimes, for a season, may obscure His glory by their sophistries or their wrath; but the storm passes over, the clouds are brushed away, and we see Jesus sitting upon the throne of the universe, and on "His head are many crowns."

Or, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the cloud came down upon its brow, the disciples feared as they entered into it, and there was a voice sounding out from the excellent glory, and Moses and Elijah were manifested; but when the cloud was lifted up, "they saw no man, save Jesus only." So will the Comforter exalt Jesus. He is now convincing the world more fully than at any previous time that its great sin is unbelief in Christ; that the source of its righteousness is only to be found in Christ; and that Christ is to be the final Judge of all men.

And not only so; He is taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to His people. The Spirit is revealing their corruptions in order to lead them to the fountain of His blood, where all may be washed away. He is opening their eyes to see the length and breadth and height of Christ's redeeming

love. Under His inspiring presence and power they are awakening to gird themselves with His own divine strength, and to robe themselves in the beautiful garments of the Redeemer's righteousne And when they shall be thus girded and thus robed, they will irradiate the world with His reflected glory, and shake it to its very centre by His imparted power. One only condition is essential in order to realize this wonderful gift of the Holy Ghost for the production of these grand results, and that is—*believing prayer*. "Ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!" "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."[m]

Blessed Comforter, Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son: put forth Thy power, and finish speedily Thy great work in this redeemed world. Amen.

[m] Isaiah lxii. 6, 7; xxxii. 15; lv. 13.

APPENDIX.

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST

OF

REFORMERS AND MARTYRS, EPISCOPALIAN, PURITAN, AND NONCONFORMIST DIVINES,

WHO HAVE HELD AND TAUGHT THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIRECT WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO A BELIEVER'S ADOPTION.

Selected from a "goodly fellowship" of Authorities, given pages 129 to 179, in "The Witness of the Spirit;" by the Rev. CHARLES PREST. Third Edition. 1871. London: Wesleyan Conference Office.

THE REFORMERS.

1539. *Calvin.* Whilst the Spirit witnesses that we are the sons of God, He at the same time inspires this confidence into our minds that we are bold to call God our Father. Let it be observed that Paul ascribes this universally to all Christians.

1540. *Luther.* Let us assure ourselves that God sendeth the Holy Ghost into our hearts. This I say to confute that pernicious doctrine of the Papists, which taught that no man certainly knows whether he be in the favour of God or no; whereby they utterly defaced the doctrine of faith, tormented men's consciences, banished Christ quite out of the Church, and darkened and denied all the benefits of the Holy Ghost.

1540. *Melancthon.* The Holy Spirit is sent into the hearts of believers that He may kindle new light, right-

eousness, and life eternal: He witnesses, bears testimony within us, that we are received into favour.

THE ENGLISH MARTYRS.

1540. *Cranmer.* The same Holy Ghost doth also assure and warrant us that our sins be forgiven, and that our pardon is signed with God's seal. And when we have received the Holy Ghost, He doth kindle in our hearts true love towards God.

1554. *Hooper.* I believe the Holy Ghost is the pledge and earnest of our heavenly heritage, by the which we be assured, ascertained, and certainly persuaded in our consciences, that we be the children of God, and brethren adoptives to Jesus Christ, and consequently co-heirs to eternal life.

1536. *Latimer.* For as long as we be here, God showeth Himself unto us by grace; He ascertaineth us through His Spirit of His favour.

1554. *Ridley.* A man may know whether he is now, at this present time, in the favour of God or no. The Spirit of God is given to us, to put us in surety that God favoureth us; and if we lack this Spirit, we be not of Christ.

1530. *Tyndale.* The Spirit, through faith, certifieth my conscience that my sins are forgiven, and I received under grace, and made the very son of God, and beloved of God. And then, naturally, mine heart breaketh out into the love of God.

THE FATHERS AND DIGNITARIES OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

1615. *Bishop Abbot.* When, therefore, God doth send forth His Spirit into our hearts, crying, and making us to cry, Abba, Father, the same is a witness to our spirit that we are the sons of God; because, for no other reason doth God send forth His Spirit into our hearts, but because we are sons.

1618. *Bishop Andrews.* It is the proper effect of the blood of Christ to cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God; which if we find it doth, Christ is come to us as He is to come; and the Spirit is come, and puts His *teste*, "witness:" and if we have this *teste* we may go our way in peace.

1601. *Bishop W. Barlow.* The Christian hath a two-fold argument of God's love;—Jesus crucified, and the pledge of the Spirit justifying him, and testifying unto him that he is the son of God.

1670. *Dr. Isaac Barrow.* This is that Spirit of adoption which constituteth us the sons of God; qualifying us so to be, by dispositions resembling God, and filial affections towards Him; certifying us that we are so, and causing us, by a free instinct, to cry, Abba, Father.

1663. *Arthur Dent.* The persuasion of God's love towards us is the root of all our love and cheerful obedience towards Him: for therefore we love and obey Him, because we know He hath loved us first, and written our names in the book of life.

1590. *Richard Hooker.* The Spirit of God hath been given to us, to assure us that we are the sons of God, to embolden us to call upon Him as our Father.

1682. *Bishop Hopkins.* The Holy Ghost persuades and assures us of the love and favour of God, and enables us, through Divine light beaming in upon our consciences, to behold Him as a gracious and reconciled Father.

1672. *Bishop Pearson.* It is the office of the Holy Ghost to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God towards us, and to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance.

1632. *Bishop Reynolds.* Being persuaded of God's love to us, the heart is framed to love Him again; for who can be persuaded of so great a benefit as the

remission of sins, and not love Him by whom they are remitted?

1789. *Thomas Robinson.* A knowledge of the Divine favour is what we also may ask and look for. Even now the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. How great, then, is their presumption who deny the possibility of attaining an assurance of salvation! How sinful their remissness who are satisfied without it! How awful their delusion who expect or pretend to it in any allowed habits of wickedness!

1802. *Charles Simeon.* God hath been pleased to give us the witness of the Spirit, in a way of immediate impression. As, by the sealing of the Spirit, He stamps His own image on His children for the conviction of others; so, by the witness of the Spirit, He testifies to their adoption for the more immediate comfort of their own souls.

1664. *Dr. South.* Assurance is a rarity covered from the inspection of the world; a secret that none can know but God and the person that is blessed with it. It is writ in a private character, not to be read nor understood but by the conscience, to which the Spirit of God has vouchsafed to decipher it.

1650. *Archbishop Usher.* From adoption flows all Christians' joy; for the Spirit of adoption is first, a witness, Romans viii. 16; second, a seal, Ephesians iv. 30; third, the pledge and earnest of our inheritance, Ephesians i. 14; setting a holy security on the soul, whereby, even in affliction, it rejoiceth in hope of glory.

1595. *Dr. Whitaker.* The Holy Ghost Himself is given to us, who assureth us most certainly that we are the sons of God, so as now we do not doubt to call God, Father.

THE PURITANS AND NONCONFORMIST DIVINES.

1652. *Isaac Ambrose.* The Spirit gives a direct witness of His own, which is His immediate work, and is, in a way of peculiarity and transcendency, called "the witness of the Spirit."

1643. *Paul Bayne.* Of the Person of the Spirit it is spoken that It beareth witness to our spirits, that we are God's children and heirs with Christ. The Spirit of God doth, by His own testimony in special manner, confirm and assure us this way.

1637. *Byfield.* He that truly believeth hath the witness in himself, even the witness of the Spirit of adoption, testifying by unspeakable joys the assurance of God's love. The adopted have the Spirit within them to testify that they are the sons of God.

1683. *Dr. Samuel Clarke.* The Spirit of God does by His own immediate power imprint this persuasion upon the heart, "Thou art a child of God;" and by an inward and secret, yet powerful, voice, doth say to the soul, "Thou art a believer, thy sins are pardoned."

1622. *John Downmane.* How is it possible to receive the seal of the Holy Spirit without feeling the impression?

1640. *Jeremiah Dyke.* God does not only pardon sin, but God assures a sinner of his pardon. Do but consider that text, Zechariah iii. 3: "Joshua was then clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel," before Christ. And, verse 4, Christ speaks twice; He speaks to them that stood by, and to Joshua himself. "To them that stood by, He said, Take away the filthy garments from him." It is My will and pleasure that Joshua's sins be taken away and pardoned. That's happy for Joshua. But is that all? No. He speaks a second time; "and unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee."

So that Christ doth not only pardon a sinner, but gives the pardoned sinner assurance of it. There is not only a sentence of absolution pronounced in the court of heaven before those who stand before Christ, but a sentence of absolution pronounced in the court of conscience.

1655. *Simon Ford.* The testimony of the Spirit is immediate, by His secret influence upon the heart, quieting and calming all distrust and diffidence concerning its condition, by His own immediate power. Fear is banished by a soft whisper from the Spirit of God in the heart; and this in such a way, that though the spirit of man is immediately calmed by it, yet he cannot tell how it comes to pass.

1748. *Dr. Gill.* The thing which the Spirit witnesses to is, that we are the sons of God. The spirits of the saints receive the witness of the Spirit of God, not to their ears—it is not an audible testimony—but to their hearts; it is internal to their understandings, that they may know and be assured of it. Now, it is the Spirit Himself that bears this witness, and not others, or by others, but He Himself in Person: who is a Divine Witness, whose testimony therefore must be greater than others; and a faithful Witness, who will never deceive, for He witnesses what he knows, and what is sure and certain.

1653. *Dr. Thomas Goodwin.* The Holy Ghost Himself raises the heart to see its adoption and sonship by an immediate discovery of God's mind and love. The Spirit receives and borrows no witness from what is in us, but makes His own abundantly satisfy.

1678. *Manton.* No man hath satisfying comfort by the blood of Christ, till it be sprinkled upon his heart, and applied to him by the Spirit of God, and he is thereby assured that it was shed for him. What have you to show that God is reconciled to you? This is not evident, till we have the pledge of our reconciliation

with God, the gift of the Holy Spirit. This affords infallible assurance of God's favour.

1657. *Dr. Owen.* The Comforter comes; and by a word of promise, or otherwise, overpowers the heart with a comfortable persuasion, (and bears down all objections) that he is a child of God.

1700. *Poole.* The Holy Spirit witnesseth *to* our spirit by a distinct and immediate testimony, and witnesseth *with* our Spirit (so the word properly signifies) by a conjunctive and concurrent testimony.

1630. *Preston.* The witness of the Spirit is a thing that we cannot express. It is a certain secret manifestation that God hath received us, and put away our sins. No man knows it but they that have it. I confess, it is a wondrous thing, and if there were not some Christians that did feel it, and know it, you might believe there were no such thing, that it were but fancy and enthusiasm. But it is certain there are a generation of men that know what this seal of the Lord is.

1637. *Richard Sibbs.* It is idle to speak of a special revelation, unless we call it so, as it is hid from the world. So, every Christian hath a special revelation from the Spirit; for the Spirit, which knows the secret things of God and which knows his heart, testifies to him that he is a child of God. And so he hath a special revelation. But not if we distinguish one Christian from another; every true Christian hath this revelation.

MISCELLANEOUS: ANCIENT AND MODERN.

1549. *The Sum and Content of Holy Scripture.* (Prefixed to some of the early editions of the English Bible.) Faith once received, God giveth His Holy Ghost, wherewith He tokeneth and marketh all that believe: which is the pledge and earnest that we shall possess everlasting life, and that giveth witness unto our spirits,

and grafteth this faith in us, that we be the sons of God; pouring therewith the love into our hearts which Paul describeth and setteth out to the Corinthians.

1608. *Certain godly Prayers to be used for sundry purposes.* (Bound up in the Book of Common Prayer.) Almighty and merciful Lord, which givest unto Thy elect people the Holy Ghost, as a sure pledge of Thy heavenly kingdom; Grant unto us, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit, that He may witness with our spirit that we be Thy children, and heirs of Thy kingdom. Amen.

1638. *The Confession of the Christian Faith.* (Appended to the Authorised Version of the English Bible.) I believe and confess the Holy Ghost, God equal with the Father and the Son; who regenerateth and sanctifieth us, ruleth and guideth us into all truth, persuading us most assuredly in our consciences that we be the children of God, brethren to Jesus Christ, and fellow-heirs with Him of life everlasting.

1744. *George Whitefield.* Your Lordship says: "We know no more of the working of the Spirit than we know of the wind—from whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." Neither need we know any more of them: but you must allow that we know as much. Cannot your Lordship, then, *feel* the wind? Does not your Lordship know when it makes any impression upon your body? So easy it is for a spiritual man to know when the Holy Spirit makes an impression upon his soul.—*Answer to the Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter.*

1768. *Sir Richard Hill.* As to the word *sensible*, when applied to the operations of the Spirit, I freely confess that unless there is such a thing as the sensible feeling of the Holy Ghost in the heart, I neither know why He is styled the Comforter, nor why our Church teaches us to pray that we may evermore rejoice in His holy comfort.—*Goliath Slain.*

1844. *Henry Martyn.* After a long and blessed season in prayer, I *felt* the Spirit of adoption drawing me very near to God, and giving me the full assurance of His love.—*Memoirs.*

1857. *Charles Kingsley.* As for the impossibility of such a direct assurance, it is an assertion too silly to be seriously answered in the nineteenth century, which is revealing, weekly, wonders in the natural world which would have seemed impossible to our fathers. Shall the natural world at every step transcend our boldest dreams; and shall the spiritual world be limited by us to the merest common-places of every-day experience, especially when these common-places are as yet utterly unexplained and miraculous? When will men open their eyes to the plain axiom, that nothing is impossible with God—save that He should transgress His own nature by being unjust and unloving.—*Preface to Dr. John Tauler's Life and Sermons.*

1864. *Archbishop Trench.* In the East, as with us, the ring was also often a seal; Esther iii. 10, 12; Jeremiah xxii. 24. Here is a point of connection between the giving of the ring and such Scriptures as Ephesians i. 13, 14, and 2 Corinthians i. 22, in which a sealing by God's Spirit is spoken of; whereby the faithful are assured, as by an earnest, of a larger inheritance in reserve for them, witnessing as it does with their spirits that they are the children of God: Galatians iv. 6; Romans viii. 16, 23; 2 Corinthians v. 5.—*Parables; the Prodigal Son.*

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